

UPSTAIRS/DOWNSTAIRS: BUILDING THE CHURCH FROM THE BOTTOM UP  
MOUNT ZION AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH YEAR-ROUND CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

By

ALFREDA GRIFFIN-JOHNSON

DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

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ALFREDA GRIFFIN-JOHNSON

## ABSTRACT

### UPSTAIRS/DOWNSTAIRS: BUILDING THE CHURCH FROM THE BOTTOM UP MOUNT ZION AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH YEAR-ROUND CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

By

Alfreda Griffin-Johnson

Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church is located in Harlem, in New York City. It is an aging and declining congregation with few children and young adults. The Demonstration Project developed a year-round after school Children's Program in an attempt to both fill an urgent community need and to help revitalize a declining congregation. A congregational study revealed a need for a visionary with insight into what would bring renewed energy to the insiders in the church and would allow insiders to observe the needs of outsiders in their neighboring community.

Following the teachings of our church, demonstration project created a model for children's Outreach Ministry of Educational and Spiritual support bridging the gap between Mount Zion A. M. E. Church and its neighboring community. The primary focus of the church seems to be specifically on the members within the church and raising money to keep the church afloat. By instituting the Children's Program, a church will provide an alternative to the insular and unwelcoming present of the congregation and promote an ambitious program to attract new members and increase the vitality of both the congregation and the community.

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## CHAPTER1 INTRODUCTION

I am an Itinerant Elder serving as an Associate Minister at Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church located at 1765 Madison Avenue in Manhattan, New York City. As a member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, we endorse and follow the Mission Statement of A. M. E. Church:

The Mission of the African Methodist Episcopal Church is to minister to the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, and environmental needs of all people by spreading Christ's liberating gospel through word and deed. At every level of the Connection and in every local church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church shall engage in carrying out the spirit of the original Free African Society, out of which the AME Church evolved: that is, to seek out and save the lost, and serve the needy.<sup>1</sup>

Founded in Philadelphia in 1787 by a former slave, Richard Allen, and other devout Methodists, the A. M. E. Church was established as a haven for African American citizens who could no longer tolerate the discrimination of the established Methodist Church. It grew mainly in the cities of the Northeast and Midwest prior to the Civil War. After the war the church spread rapidly throughout the former slave states. Today it can be found throughout the United States and in dozens of countries around the world.<sup>2</sup>

Mount Zion A. M. E. Church is located in a rapidly changing, but still underserved neighborhood in Harlem. Reports from the U. S. Census Bureau indicate that nearly half of the residents live at or just above the poverty level, with the percentage of

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<sup>1</sup> African Methodist Episcopal Church, "Mission Statement," <http://www.ame-church.com/our-church/our-mission>.

<sup>2</sup> A. M. E. Church, "history," <http://www.ame-church.com/our-church/our-history>.

households with children at a slightly higher percentage.<sup>3</sup> Following the teachings of our church, this demonstration project will create a model for children's outreach Ministry of Educational and Spiritual support.

Children ages five through eleven are not currently being integrated into the life of our church. Church and the neighboring community revealed an obvious challenge that I believe is a blessing for the ministry of Mount Zion African Methodist Church. Mount Zion is an aging and dying congregation with a few children and young adults. There is no vision for the future other than the pastor's vision of turning the upstairs part of the church into a health station for senior citizens. It seems that this vision for the church is stalled because of economic hardship facing the country at the present moment. There appears to be no attempt to understand why the health facility that was down the block on the same side of the street closed; nor does it appear that any thought has been given to what the real needs of the neighboring community are.

The primary focus of the church seems to be specifically on the members within the church and raising money to keep the church afloat—which, of course, is understandable. However, I believe this project started at just the right time under the divine intervention of God so that Mount Zion would have a team that could focus on the neighboring community where the church has stood for 90 years; and examine the community to get a better understanding of the needs of the people in the church's neighborhood. A preliminary look at present neighborhood conditions revealed a need for a visionary with insight into what would bring renewed energy to the insiders in the

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<sup>3</sup> U. S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder, "Community Facts"  
<http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF> (accessed January 14, 2015).

church and would allow insiders to observe the needs of outsiders in their neighboring community.

A look around would reveal a hurt and unfriendly people in an aging, dying congregation where most of its members had either stopped coming to church entirely or those who only came to church on their Sunday of commitment. They were all a part of the unfriendly, hurt group of people who were unwelcoming and very controlling toward any new people who came to their church.

It was because of this that we felt something had to be done for the church and for the church's surrounding area. When my site team and I looked back in the church's archives and saw that the church once had over 100 children, we wanted to help revitalize the church and its community back to what it once was. We wanted to bring back some happiness to the church. We knew children had the ability to make people feel happy, get people to laugh, and to get their parents to do whatever their child wanted their parents to do. So as we searched, we amazingly found that both Mount Zion A. M. E. Church and its neighboring community had an obvious need—one that would aid both the church and the community. Because of the attitude of the people in the church, my site team and I decided that children were needed to bring change to the aging, dying church—hopefully, bridging the gap between Mount Zion A. M. E. Church and its neighboring community.

The investigation conducted on the neighboring community revealed two things: first, there was going to be a new charter school coming into the community with unique hours for their school; secondly, we discovered that there was no after-school program in the neighboring community that could accommodate the hours of the school dismissal and none that provided transportation to after-school programs.

This led the Site Team to see the need for a unique after-school program as similar to a job I once held. I felt that the job that I was doing at the time was really beneath me. I could not understand at that time why God would ask me to pick up children from their school and serve them at table to feed them. But I now understand that the reason I was at that job was because there was going to be a need at another appointed time to use what was learned to help keep Mount Zion A. M. E. Church alive. Little did I know that there was going to be a need in another area of the community for a specific kind of child care service that would make use of my skills. What a God we serve who knows everything and just how things are going to play out. The reason I say only God knows is because I did not even know of this church at the time I began work at Union Settlement.

Developing such a program would bring the church community into contact with many children and their families and all of these families would be potential members for the church. The church members also needed to become more child-friendly to embrace the potential of these children and their families coming into the church. Mount Zion A. M. E. Church started with family members and still today has many members that are related to one another in some way. The current church members need to become friendlier and less insular—welcoming outsiders coming into their church community. This is necessary because Mount Zion A. M. E. Church has lost new members due to the unfriendly reception by the congregants. Creating a children's year-round program would attract both children and their parents because parents will support their children in whatever way that makes their children happy. .



## CHAPTER 2

### A CHARTER SCHOOL MOVES IN AND I START A BUSINESS

The decision to place the focus on bringing children between the ages of five thru twelve into the church had to be imparted to us by God. In fact deciding to use the children as the prime variable was a magnificent choice because everything that is happening would not, in my opinion, be occurring if there were no Children's Program.

How amazing it was that at the same time the Demonstration Project Proposal started there was a new major charter school project getting ready to begin in the community surrounding the Mount Zion A. M. E. Church. Having had the "Church and Community" class that was a part of my Master of Divinity coursework showed me how to conduct a church study which afforded me the opportunity to conduct my first congregational study. I also discovered there was not another after-school program in the immediate area that could pick up five year olds and that could accommodate the hours of service needed for the new charter school system.

Since Mount Zion A. M. E. Church was just beginning, we could offer the kind of service needed to accommodate the needs of the new charter school children. There are so many miracles involved in this project. Unknown to my site team, we are the only after-school program in the area that picks up children 4 1/2 and 5 years old in the church's neighboring community. This unique opportunity presented itself at the right time for Mount Zion A. M. E. Church to be able to take advantage of a wonderful

opportunity. Choosing children as our primary focus has led the Children's Program to connect with many other age groups and various cultures. We have provided service to Asian, Indian, and Hispanic clients; and we are currently getting ready to have a Middle Eastern client. And all of these families are considered members of the Mount Zion A.M.E. Church family that has helped to revitalize our church and the neighboring community.

Having decided to provide services for children between the ages of 5 thru 11, to get started at the church various city agencies had to become involved in the process. The Department of Health played a major role in every step of developing the project. This is the city agency that examined my education credentials and gave me permission to start the Children's Program in the church. This part of the process was easy since my professional field is education. I therefore, had the necessary education requirements and credentials needed to open a school-age program at Mount Zion A. M. E. Church.

A series of training sessions were required: 1) A 30 hour training class in the areas of management in order to receive certification; 2) a Fire Safety training class conducted by New York City Fire Department; 3) mandatory directors training classes which explained how various city agencies use forms in order to be paid for services given to clients receiving public assistance that would be reimbursed by the city; 4) First Aid and CPR training; a four hour food training class which was followed with paper work that needed to be filled out in order for the program to administering medication; and 5) creation and explanation of the new program's medical plan procedures for children attending the program. I never thought it would take all of these procedures to start a Children's Program in the church.

After training, we created a safety plan which would explain safety procedures conducted for each activity children would be involved with in the church and outside of the church. A floor layout map was created in duplicate copies along with a very large floor plan poster which had to be posted in an area viewed by anyone entering the site. After completion of the training and plan, we went down to the Department of Buildings located at 253 Broadway with a \$100 check to apply for a Letter of No Objection from the Department of Buildings signed by the building Commissioner.

However, before the Letter of No Objection could be received, a letter was required explaining the hours and days the Children's Program would operate. This letter was needed along with the \$100 because the church did not have their Certificate of Occupancy for the building. This made it necessary for a building inspector from the department of buildings to come to the church site to inspect the church. The inspection showed repairs were needed and that additional items that had to be put in place in order for the church to meet the necessary requirements. As a result of the inspection, a door had to be installed and a hand rail had to be added in the lady's room.

The next inspection was done by a team of firemen. The Fire Chief explained what types of trash cans were needed as well as the need to include a carbon monoxide alarm along with various exit signs to indicate how to exit the building. We were also told to make sure all exits were unblocked. All of these requirements had to be put in place including having a monthly fire drill log that was kept in clear view.

Additional items were added to make the church child-proof, such as locks on cabinets in the bathroom as well as leaving the upstairs doors unlocked from the inside for easy exit. We posted emergency telephone numbers in public view, and were trained

by the department of health on how to watch the children while they are in our care at the site.

The next step was to contact the main headquarters of African Methodist Episcopal Church for a copy of the church incorporation papers, in order for the Children's Program to receive their own separate Employee Identification Number (EIN). This number was needed for tax purposes for both the Children's Program and for parents to receive credit for the fees they pay when parents file their tax returns. Finally we obtained program ID numbers from the Human Resource Administration for each session of the Children's Program in order to receive payment for services rendered to children receiving public assistance.

The church building is now certified for children to be on site just like a school building. After all of the requirements were put in place the last visible change to the setting was having a sign placed on the outside of the church announcing a brand new Children's Program in the community called "Another Choice Year-Round Children's Program" that also says what type of city agency fees are accepted. This is an amazing visible change that can be seen as pedestrians pass Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church on foot or as they ride by the church building in a car or bus.

When you enter the church now and come down to the lower level of the church where the Children's Program is housed you immediately hear music and children playing. The music was made possible when a member of the church donated a very large radio with a CD player to the Children's Program.

I was totally surprised to see that even the food pantry staff began to listen to music as they prepared bags for the community and cooked food for the Soup Kitchen.

The pantry staff not only listens to music now but they prepare breakfast and sit and have breakfast with each other and pray before they serve food to the community. When I saw this change I wanted to say, “Hello, is this the same church?” This group has become a community as they serve the neighboring community.

Another obvious change is seeing high school students from neighborhood schools volunteering with the Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen. This is definitely a major change I never thought I would see happen in this church because the members were so mean-spirited. It’s a great thing to see church members working with high school students showing them how to pack bags for the community. Seeing this happen shows that having children around has had an effect on members of the church and shows how they have softened a great deal in order for them to work with high school students because high school students want to have fun while they’re working. Having fun makes them work better and enjoy what they are doing.

There is now a lot of laughing and music playing around the church because of the Children’s Program being in the church. Church members have changed so much at the church since the Children’s Program started. Various church groups now leave food in the refrigerator with a note informing Reverend Johnson that the food is for the children. It is quite amazing how God has used the children’s ministry to change people in this church and gotten children and their families to join the church, using the Children’s Program as a venue.

I’d like to thank my pastor Reverend Owings for embracing this project as soon as I approached her with the idea. Pastor Owings supported the idea from the start and she immediately began to promote the program to the church congregation.

I'm certain churches are dying because the only vision being implemented is the pastor's vision. This is why I thanked Rev. Owings for embracing the Demonstration Project. Having Reverend Owings embrace the project shows she has a prophetic imagination and a genuine concern for the growth of her church; and because of her prophetic imagination her church is maintaining membership while other churches' membership are declining. I congratulate Pastor Owings and her official board for their immediate acceptance and incorporation of the Children's Program. Even after it was incorporated, Reverend Owings still kept forging ahead trying to get the church body to accept the program; at every church meeting she called me up to make a report of how the program was progressing.

My site team and I also kept working; we did not let the fact that there was little support from the church body stop us. We kept forging ahead as well, placing fliers in buildings and on lampposts and taking fliers to neighboring schools within the area to reach a wider audience. Then we focused on beginning the summer camp session. All summer camps have to be screened by the Department of Health to make sure all their requirements are met. This was great for the Children's Program because after the entire Department of Health's requirements are met, the department places all of the approved camps in a summer camp manual that is circulated throughout the five boroughs. The Health Department's announcement lists the camp's location and activities for no charge. This gave the Mount Zion Year-Round Children's Program free advertisement and access to many communities in the city of New York.

### CHAPTER 3 FINDING A COOK, STAFFING A BUILDING

Finding the first cook was not an easy task because the church members were not supporting the program and no one from the church came forth to help or wanted to work as the program cook. However, after much searching I was finally able to hire one of the members from the church, Sister Brown, as the Children's Program first cook. This helped everyone to realize that the program was going to be established regardless of their support.

After this initial step of hiring Sister Brown, the program was able to begin. So I began to bring books and toys from my home that I had from being a former school PPT. I even went to my old school a few blocks away to ask for donations of old text books to get us started. I can hardly believe that I created all of the necessary forms that comprise the application for perspective clients such as contract agreement, medical forms, emergency contact sheets, pickup form trip consent sheets, etc. All had to be created and ready for the start of the program.

I literally asked a young adult that was walking down the street if she needed a job and this young lady said yes—she was one of my first employees. The other employees were all found by my using the same method because I was not going to let anything stop this project from happening. I reached out to my former boss Steve Portofino for support and direction and he was more than happy to give me some

pointers. I was so excited about how things were going that I rented a community room and honored those that were a part of helping the program to get started and honored my former boss, my pastor employees, and the neighboring principals from two schools to which I was able to hand out fliers. I gave this event to show appreciation to all who played a role in helping the program become a reality.

I'm getting to know just how many hats the founder or owner of a business has to wear. As the founder, owner, manager, or whatever I am now, I must always have a backup plan for everything pertaining to running the Children's Program—which I now know is a business because of the unexpected things that happen when you're operating a business. Things were going very well until I took off to have a little vacation. Taking a vacation is something I never thought of because I use vacation money to pay for my school and time off only when I need to be in school.

However, my pastor said I should have a vacation because everyone needs to take a vacation, to get a little rest. But I learned that when you take a vacation people still call while you're on your vacation; but when I answered their calls, I made it very clear to folks that they were very capable of handling things in my absence, and so please allow me to enjoy my time off. Well, upon my return one of my workers complained that she was overworked and the other worker said she was treated so unfairly because she did not know as much about doing things as the other worker. I was also told that the person who filled in for me delegated everything to one worker and did not give any work to the other worker. And the third worker just went along with whatever was happening. There were a lot of unhappy employees when I returned and some unhappy parents well. There was some training of all employees that needed to be done.



When I returned from vacation I made certain that all workers knew the operation of the Children's Program. I decided to make sure each worker knew what to do in each area of the business operation. As a result of this the worker who complained about being overworked now felt she was now being left out and was not being used. This was the beginning of a nightmare of a revolving door of new employees. I thought I was now making things better by making sure every employee understood the operations and correcting the situation—especially since the two workers who had different complaints were good friends, I thought things would be better.

However, I would soon learn that this was not the case because once I started teaching the employee that felt like quitting the other employee that said she was overworked began a mission of trying to destroy the business by attempting to create division in the workplace. This started after I began to train the other employee in things about the job she didn't know how to do. The worker that was supposed to be the other worker's friend did not attempt to show her because this allowed the overworked worker to make overtime. And to cap off the situation the cook mentioned that she had to go into the hospital for surgery.

This all took place just before summer which is the time the cook has off. I thought the cook would be back by the time school resumed, but this was not the case. August came around which is when most of the children who attend charter schools return to school and the cook still had not returned.

But somehow God always seems to have a ram in the bush for me and the program. To my surprise a woman came to register her two children in the program. I registered her two children into the program and we began to talk and I found out that

this woman needed a job and loved to cook. So she was hired immediately and she was a hit with the all of the employees and parents in the program.

The parents liked the cook and it seemed to be a good idea to keep the new cook because the former cook said that she was going to go out on disability and she was not going to return. (I think I should mention that the former cook was always cooking a lot of onions and the children did not really like her food.) I therefore made a decision that I would keep the new cook and offered her the position of program cook. Several months after I offered the job to the new cook, the former cook came by the program and told me her doctor said she could come back to work. I had to explain to the former cook that she told me that she was not returning so I hired another cook.

It was shortly after this that I began to notice that a new employee bought herself a Bluetooth which allowed her to stay on the phone all day long. I also began to notice that all of the parents were beginning to stand at the door to talk with her every day. Other employees would also stand at the window and talk with her all day instead of doing her work. Eventually parents began calling this employee to give her information about their children that they should have been giving to the program director. I nicely informed her that she should not have parents calling her giving her information about their children that they should be calling me. Things were getting out of hand, and I was beginning to see that it was not a good decision to hire her.

She was creating her own little circle of friends and creating an environment that was not good for the program. The parents were beginning to wait for her by sitting in chairs outside of the kitchen and then they would all go home as a group and stand outside of the church talking. I did not really know what I was going to do to change

what I saw being created within the Children's Program. It was like the employee was creating a little following that was getting out of control.

I needed her for the program and had to think about how I was going to handle the situation. At the same time, the problem with employees had expanded and I saw something beginning to happen in the program that was not healthy for the business. I therefore had to think about how I was going to handle the situation. The employee that had previously told me that she was feeling overworked during the summer was beginning to get very close to the new employee. This new employee told me that she felt I was treating the woman unfairly because I was not honoring her request and training the other workers in areas that would help her feel less overworked. Once I started training the other employees, however the disgruntled employee said that I was not treating her fairly, as she would get less overtime.

I tried to explain to the unhappy employee that I was only attempting to train the employee because she said she was feeling overworked when I was on vacation, even though she was making overtime. This did not seem to make a difference to her, as it appeared that her mind had been made up and she had decided that she was going to leave. She came in one day and told me that she would not be able to give me two weeks' notice because she had found herself another job and she needed to leave the next day. This was definitely a surprise to me. The next day the cook told me that she had to go with her mother to the doctor and she needed to be out on a particular day. A couple of days later the cook called me and told me that she was going to be late because she needed to pick her mother up from the hospital and take her home.

She called back again and said she was going to be later and wanted to know if she should even bother to come into work. I told her to just go ahead and take the day because it was so late. This meant that I now had to become the cook because I did not have a substitute cook at this point. Because this was a new business I filled in for any position that was without an employee. If it was a pickup from school staff that was out I would become the pickup staff. In this case I had to become the cook.

I decided that I was going to write the cook up because I had previously warned her about texting me to inform that she would not be coming into work. So this action on her part deserved a written warning, but little did I know that was that she had decided that she was also going to resign. She informed that she could give me two weeks' notice but I told her that it would not be necessary for her to give two week notice that she could resign right on the spot. So she handed in her resignation

### **The first new cook begins.**

It is amazing how God directs or should I say how God orders our steps. I believe this is what is meant in the scripture that says that the "steps of a good man are ordered by God" (Ps. 37:23). When I was wondering who I would get to take over the position of cook, I immediately began to think of a young man that most recently was hanging around where I live. The reason I thought about him was because he asked me for some money and I could tell that he was not doing so well. I was thinking I would give the job to this young man. As I was going downstairs to my neighbor's house to ask how I could find this young man, I decided that I would ask my neighbor for his address. But I decided to wait, and first ask my neighbor if he wanted the job because I know that he used to own a catering business but then I thought no because he is retired.

When I asked him for his grandson he said “What about me. Am I too old?” and I said, “No you can start tomorrow if you like.” By the time I arrived home my son told me that my neighbor had come by to tell me that he would be ready to start working the next day. What a blessing! This man owned his own catering business and knows everything there is to know about cooking. He did fill the gap and did a good job until he got sick three weeks ago and had to resign, so I am right back where I started. I am once again the program cook until I find a new one. However, it did not make much sense to look for a cook right away because school was almost out; and we can’t use a cook during the summer because it is not allowed by the Department of Health during the summer months. So I decided to be the program cook until summer meals started in June. This is what a manager or business owner has to do to keep the business going.

This Children’s Program is a business that helps the church financially and has brought children and their families into the church. I’m so pleased to say that the program is operating with a purpose. Keeping the program going has not been easy but God has given me the strength to keep things going. This Children’s Program was developed for the purpose of bringing children between the ages of five and eleven years of age and their families into the church and so far ten families have joined the church and become members of the church.

I never knew how much hard work it would take to be a good employer until I became the founder of Mount Zion A. M. E. Church Year-Round Children’s Program. Looking at this program from a business vantage has helped me gain the knowledge of how hard it is to have a business and how much work it takes to keep a business running. The Children’s Program has lost four employees and I have hired three new employees,

one of which got sick and had to stop working. I am currently the program's cook until we hire another one. God keeps me in the thinking mode, always keeping things moving in program.

I always have to think about what I'm going to do next or who I can get to do something in the event that something goes wrong. A business owner must be someone who is very skillful and creative. Why? Because each time someone leaves, the owner has to know either how to do the job or know who is going to take the place of the person that has left. In most cases both of these situations need to be thought of and handled. The person running the business must be able to work in any vacant positions until someone is found.

A good business person should always keep a list of potential people who are looking to work and need a job. This way you always have a backup plan when an employee decides to leave you stranded without giving proper notice. Operating a business takes your whole being because it is your baby and you want to take care of it just like you take care of your own child.

I am pleased to say that two workers that left the Children's Program have now been able to upgrade their resumes and have moved on to better paying jobs because of the work experience developed while working at Mount Zion Year-Round Children's Program and gaining various types of skills. There are office skills to be gained, such as filing, telephone, technical, and bulletin boards, as well as writing and teaching skills, such as writing lesson plans. Various other skills are developed from working in Mount Zion A. M. E. Church Year-Round Children's Program, such as CPR and First Aid training, along with training in how to work with children. These are all good skills that

can be used in various jobs if one has the proper education to go along with them. This is why I constantly encourage workers to continue their education because obtaining this foundation can lead to many other areas.

One little girl from the program now has her mother, two aunts and uncle attending the church. Last week a new parent whose child attends the program came to me and asked what time Sunday worship service began. I took her and introduced her to my pastor letting her know that this particular parent was interested in attending the Sunday Morning worship Service. The following day one little girl's parents told me that she attended the morning worship service. I was really surprised because this particular parent lives all the way in the upper Bronx. I was amazed that she and her daughter came all the way from the Bronx to attend our morning worship service.

At Mount Zion at the Children's Program I am still working hard and learning how to operate a business while ministry is happening and God's work is being carried out—the employee that recently resigned found a new job and came to Mount Zion A. M. E. Church on that third Sunday and became the godmother of the former cook's two children.

We have learned a great deal about hiring and firing and maintaining employees. We discovered that putting out program materials for the children allows them to create their own experience. The staff supervises the children and only intervenes when there is a need to correct a behavior. Another one of the plans that we had for the program that we have realized at the Children's Program is having employees work split shifts. The reason this works for us at the Children's Program is that it allows us to have enough workers on board working at the program the entire day during the summer months when

there is no school. Also working split shifts during the summer months also helps to keep working hour's part-time just as we work during the fall. So basically all employees work a total of 4 hours throughout the entire year unless there is a need for an employee to work double shifts and make overtime for some particular reason. \

One of those reasons would be if there are more than twelve children on a given shift during the morning hours then a worker would be asked to work an additional shift. This rarely happens but we must have staff to work every shift because children attend summer school during the summer to help them with whatever tutoring they might need. This is also why there is a need for staff to work split shifts during the summer months.

During the fall when children are also going to tutoring staff members go back to pick up the child at that different time. Their parents would go straight to their child's school from work and pick up the child if these extra hours were closer to their normal pick up time.

Having this process of working split shifts is exactly what gives Mount Zion Year-Round Children's Program the edge over in other Children's Program because most programs do not have these techniques in place and this is what gives us the edge over other after school programs. The Mount Zion A. M. E. Church Year-Round Children's Program was designed and created to be intentionally flexible.

The Women's Day Committee wanted me to head the Women's Day Platform Worship Service. This is a worship service that is held just before the Annual Women's Day actually takes place. At the platform worship service there are seven speakers that speak a word to encourage the women of Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church. It is a worship service that brings all of the women of the church together and



encourages the women of the church to continue to work together for the good of the church and as good disciples of God.

This year's worship service was very amazing because one of the children from the program asked if she could bring a word about God. This girl was only nine years old and she brought a great word that showed that this child learned about God and how we should all work together as brothers and sisters in Christ. What I thought was so good about this is the fact that this is one of the program's children that I could also bring to church. The child's parents do not go to church but they allow her to go to church with me.

What made this year's worship service so special for me is that this same child and a five other children from the Children's Program also made a praise dance and danced to "Take Me to the King." Not only did the Children's Program performed a praise dance but one of the mothers picked out dresses for the girls to praise dance and other parents donated wings to the program that went perfectly with the dress and the children really praised God.

Not only did the children from the Children's Program praise dance but I also had one of the workers from the program that volunteered to bring a word. It was so nice to see how God was moving with the children and workers from the program. I also was blessed because my pastor from my new church also allowed her children praise dancers to come and praise dance at Mount Zion A. M. E.

The members from the new church came to support both myself and other speakers from their church who spoke at Mount Zion A. M. E. Church. The evening of the worship service was really a connectional worship service of two sister churches

together in praise and worship. The little girl who brought the word was very good and her parents were very proud of her because this little girl's behavior really began to change once she began to go to church. Before she went to church she used to be in trouble all of the time. But once she began to attend Sunday school a change in her behavior could be seen. It was great to see now this little girl began to mature.

In my Demonstration Project Proposal I had asked, "Can a child lead its parents to God?" Jesus answered this when he said "Let the little children come to me, and stop keeping them away, because the kingdom from heaven belongs to people like these" (Matt. 19:14). After going to the new church there was a program happening at the old church that I wanted to attend that was being chaired by a young person who also had a platform worship service with speakers all under the age of 25 years old. While at the worship service I happened to notice the little girl with her mother and father. I was impressed because I did not invite this family—I did not even know they knew about the worship service. But when I noticed this family in the church I was very happy to see them there, but I could tell that the little girl did not look so happy.

When I got the chance to speak with her parents during a break in the worship service, I asked her mother what was the matter and her mother told me that the little girl did not want to come to the worship service. So when I got the chance to speak with the little girl I reminded her that God put her in the church first so that she could help in getting her parents to go to church so she should therefore not act the way she was behaving. This little girl's parents thanked me for speaking to her. This was amazing because this little girl's father and mother never attempted to come to church, but now they were at a church program that was exactly like the program their daughter had

spoken in the week before. This testimony supports my hypothesis that children lead their parents to God.

## CHAPTER 4

### MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE: “A CHILD SHALL LEAD US”

The concept of “Brain Plasticity” posits that the brain is not static, but is capable of change even in adults. A congregation can develop a new way of thinking; it can come to understand that the church cannot just stand by in a community waiting for people to come into the church. Offering the experience of service to people in the church will change the way they are thinking now into a new way that allows the creation of new ways to attract people into their aging church. This process of providing new experiences to people will change what was stored in their brain and replace the old thoughts with the new insights that they received from having been involved with new experiences that change old and create new behaviors. This is how the church will be reborn and stay alive.

#### **Multiple Intelligence**

This method of learning that allows individuals to create their own learning experiences according to their own forms of “genius” is what Howard Gardner refers to as “multiple intelligence” which is one of the best ways for children to learn and to create their own intelligence which helps in strengthening any weak intelligence the child might have that needs to be strengthened. According to Gardner, all human beings possess at least eight forms of intelligence: linguistic, logical- mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalist, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Because of genetic variation and experience, the combination of intelligences takes different forms in

different people.<sup>4</sup> Different forms of intelligence “think” differently, “love” different things, and “need” different resources and modes of expression. The following table gives a brief summary.

<b>Children who are strongly:</b>	<b>Think</b>	<b>Love</b>	<b>Need</b>
<b>Linguistic</b>	in words	reading, writing, telling stories, playing word games, etc.	books, tapes, writing tools paper diaries, dialogues, discussion, debate stories
<b>Logical-Mathematical</b>	by reasoning	experimenting, questioning, figuring out puzzles, calculating, etc.	things to explore and think about, science materials, manipulatives, trips to the planetarium and science museum
<b>Spatial</b>	in images and pictures	designing, drawing, visualizing, doodling, etc.	art, LEGOs, video, movies, slides, imagination games, mazes, puzzles, illustrated books, trips to art museums
<b>Bodily-Kinesthetic</b>	through somatic sensations	dancing, running, jumping, building, touching, gesturing, etc.	role play, drama, movement, things to build, sports and physical games, tactile experiences, hands-on learning
<b>Musical</b>	via rhythms and melodies	singing, whistling, humming, tapping feet and hands, listening, etc.	sing-along time, trips to concerts, music playing at home and school, musical instruments
<b>Interpersonal</b>	by bouncing ideas off other people	leading, organizing, relating, manipulating, mediating, partying	friends, group games, social gatherings, community events, clubs, mentors/apprenticeships
<b>Intrapersonal</b>	deeply inside themselves	setting goals, meditating, dreaming, being quiet,	secret places, time alone, self-paced projects, choices

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<sup>4</sup> Howard Gardner, “Can Technology Exploit our Way of Knowing?” in David T. Gordon, *The Digital Classroom: How Technology Is Changing the Way We Teach and Learn*, 32-35 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Letter, 2000).

Allowing the children to create their own experiences is also what is called brain plasticity, which is the process that allows the brain to remove what was previously stored in the brain and replace it with new information that occurs from the new experience.

Our program, a multi-cultural, multi-intelligence method, has created an environment that the children really enjoy and never want to leave. A lot of the children even hid from their parents when their parents came to pick them up because they love the style of program we run. Because the program is a multiple intelligence program many materials are placed out in various centers for the children to be able to create their own experience—which is what multiple intelligence is all about. Creating your own experience which enhances the person's multiple intelligence and the experience changes what was formerly stored in the brain and allows it to store the new information in the brain through a process called brain plasticity which is the focus of my demonstration project.

### **Theology**

The timeliness of Rauschenbusch's insights is undeniably striking today, one hundred years after their publication. His outrage at the social and economic injustices of his day, his unrelenting critique of the capitalistic economic system that had produced so much human suffering and his urgent call for the democratization of that system could not be more relevant to our own times at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Walter Rauschenbusch's urban ministry and writings have given me a direction that will allow me to put into action what He wants me to do. Walter Rauschenbusch was a white Christian Baptist minister who was gifted and called by God to have a ministry that focused on serving the urban community. This ministry dealt with serving the

community that lived in tenement housing such that surrounding Mount Zion A. M. E. Church. He also helped various women's organization and the regular issues that people had in the community. This minister also had a lot to say about the church and how the church spoke one thing but did another when it came to practicing what they were preaching.

The Kingdom of God is still a collective conception, involving the whole social life of man. It is not a matter of saving human atoms, but of saving the social organism. It is not a matter of getting individuals to heaven, but of transforming the life on earth into the harmony of heaven.<sup>5</sup>

As a minister who has the same type of ministry I can now see what Reverend Walter Rauschenbusch was speaking about when he said the church had two voices. The one voice that the church is speaking about what Jesus did but they are not putting into practice what they are preaching; this is definitely what I am seeing occur with the church now. The church is staying very quiet when they should be speaking up. I think one could say that the church is in hiding and the church should be leading the way on this issue.

Walter Brueggemann mentions in *Prophetic Imagination* that church congregants should be allowed to put their prophetic gifts to use in their church and that this would help the ministries of the church to grow. "The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us."<sup>6</sup>

### **Let the Little Child Come**

In my Proposal I had asked, "Can a child lead its parents to God?" Jesus answered this when he said "Let the little children come to me, and stop keeping them away,

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<sup>5</sup> Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (London: Macmillan, 1916), 65.

<sup>6</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 13.

because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people like these” (Matt. 19:14) when the disciples attempted to stop the little children from coming to him. We look at receiving this information as divine intervention from God giving us a head start in preparing to be able to receive pre-k children next year because this will allow Mount Zion to have a jump start in being prepared to receive these little children.

I don’t know if the church really understands what Jesus was teaching and how Jesus helped the people because if they did they would be helping people as Jesus helped the multitudes that were always following him. The Gospels exist so the church of today might have a format to follow. But rather than follow the format, churches are conducting themselves in their own way with the result that they are dying and having to close their doors.

Churches that have closed and are up for sale are not following the blueprint that was left for them to use that clearly worked for Jesus and can work for them today. But instead many of the people in the church want to sit in the church and wait for people who are desperately trying to survive on the outside to come to them. The people on the inside of the church are supposed to go outside to help the people who are on the outside. This is what Jesus showed while He walked the earth and this is not what the churches of today are doing which is why so many churches are dying.

I think the church needs to look at how they can help people and get involved with the needs of the people. Then people would really look out for the church. The church should get involved in issues that are really affecting people, marching against the injustice that is currently being done to young black men in our country such as no



affordable housing, low paying salaries, no health insurance and families having to live in shelters for long periods of time before they are given apartments.

There are so many issues that the church remains quiet on that the church can help people with just by having a voice on issues like these. But the church just sits inside of their churches without a word being said on any issues. I really think churches need to re-interpret the word of God and get a better understanding of what the word of God says about Jesus and how He served people while he walked the earth. Jesus helped everyone He came into contact with and this is what the church of today needs to do for the people. The church needs to focus more on teaching and helping people. The church needs to have a voice in many of the issues that are affecting people today. Instead the church sits quietly without having a voice regarding any issues that are affecting people. This is not what Jesus would have done. Jesus always helped people He came into contact with. If they were hungry Jesus would feed them spiritually and with natural food. The church needs to keep up with the times and get involved with issues that are affecting people today. I am a firm believer that if the church helps people then the people would come back to the church and many of our churches would not be dying.

There are many ways the church can help people just by getting involved with the issues that are affecting people today. This is what we did at Mount Zion A. M. E. Church—we looked for the needs of the church and for the needs of the neighboring community and came up with a match that both the church and the community needed assistance with; and by doing this both the community and church benefited from the church taking part in an issue that was affecting their community as well as the church. These are the kind of issues the church needs to become involved with in helping

their neighboring community like developing food pantries and soup kitchens and offering any kind of service that can help their community in some way. As Frederick Harris states:

As an institution reflecting the interests of an economically marginal population, urban black ministers and churches have been committed to providing social services to the poor. However, that commitment varies, depending on the financial constraints of a congregation as well as on the doctrinal beliefs that may influence how churches approach the needs of the poor. Like most religious traditions, black churches exist to meet the spiritual needs of their members, leading them to devote most of their resources to maintaining and expanding the needs of the institution. For a church that can comfortably sustain its daily operations, community outreach efforts present less of a financial constraint on the institution than if that church was not on a strong financial footing. Even if churches have the financial and administrative capacity to provide social services to particular constituencies in need, doctrinal perspectives, such as the belief that the personal salvation of a person in need supercedes their social service needs, may impede the effectiveness of faith-based social services.<sup>7</sup>

When the church becomes involved with what is affecting people then people will return to the church and have interest in helping the church. I believe people are not going to church the way they use to because they have lost hope and can't see how going to church benefits them. I believe the church definitely needs to get more involved with the cares of the people and stand their ground on issues that have to do with the human rights of the people because this is what Jesus was concerned with and that was always helping people. The church needs to go back to what the initial purpose of the church was and that was to display love for the people.

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<sup>7</sup> Fredrick C. Harris, "Black Churches and Civic Traditions: Outreach, Activism, and the Politics of Public Funding of Faith-Based Ministries," in *Can Charitable Choice Work?: Covering Religion's Impact on Urban Affairs and Social Services*, edited by Andrew Walsh, 140-156 (Hartford, CT: Pew Program on Religion and the News Media, Leonard E. Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life, Trinity College, 2001), 140.

This is not something that is seen in the church today. It appears that the church has lost its purpose which was to show unconditional love for humankind. This unconditional love was called *agape* love which is the kind of love that God has for mankind. This is what is missing from the church today. The church has lost the *agape* love. In fact, the church doesn't even talk about love anymore. The church has become too concerned with the money it needs to sustain itself.

If the church would turn from their wicked ways I believe the people would return to church. I know this is not the case with all of the churches, but this is what I have seen going on in a lot of the churches. There is no display of *agape* love in the church today. This is what I remember was the focus of the church and the church was full of people. This brings to mind the message of the prophet Haggai to the church.

This is what the Lord Almighty says: "These people say, 'The time has not yet come to rebuild the Lord's house.' "

Then the word of the Lord came through the prophet Haggai: "Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?"

Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it." (Haggai 1: 2-6 NIV).

The Prophet Haggai went on to say again

This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored," says the Lord. "You expected much, but see, O it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?" declares the Lord Almighty. "Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with your own house. Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops (Haggai 1: 7-10 NIV).

The prophet Haggai goes on to tell the people that the

I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the olive oil and everything else the ground produces, on people and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands (Haggai 1: 22 NIV).

I believe if the church would go back to what Jesus demonstrated as the method of ministry of how the church should be operating, then the church would see the return of people because God would be pleased. I keep thinking what Jesus said when He walked this earth which was my people suffer because of lack of knowledge. He also said you have not because you ask not which is seeking God first. When it comes to wanting to know how things and what things should be done to get the return of God's people back into the house of the Lord—it is through actions that please God with the work that is being done in the house of the Lord. All of the things that need to be done are all from the biblical text.

The people of the church need to go back to the ways of the Lord and put God first. They need to put *agape* love back in the church of today. Rather than just thinking of themselves, they need to put God and their neighbors first. But it seems that people just don't seem to understand that this is just what God told them to do and that is to love God with all their heart, all their soul and with all their mind and to love their neighbors as they love themselves. This is so easy and this is what I do—love God with all my being and caring about what happens with people.

This is so easy to do but people only want to think of themselves first not understand that if they would love God and their neighbors first God would truly love and take care of all of their needs because this is the kind of God that we serve. I missed things being the way they used to be in many of our churches. Yes, I understand that in life things must change. But I think things should change for the better not for the worse.

When we put our complete trust in God He will work all things out for the good of those who love the Lord.

Things have not changed when it comes to God; He is exactly as He was before. God does not change; all of the things He promises, He still does. It is the people that have changed and are not listening to ways of the Lord. I truly believe if we remember to put God first at all times then God will go back to doing what God said he would do for the people because God does not change. God told Haggai to go back to the people, saying

Now give careful thought to this from this day consider how things were before one stone was laid on another in the Lord's temple. When anyone came to a heap of twenty measures there were only ten. When anyone went to a wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were only twenty.

I struck all the work of your hands with blight, mildew and hail, yet you did not return to me, declares the LORD. From this day on, from this twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, give careful thought to the day when the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid. Give careful thought: Is there yet any seed left in the barn? Until now, the vine and the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree have not borne fruit. "From this day on I will bless you" (Haggai 2: 15-19 NIV).

This is why the people and the church must go back and re-interpret the word of God and put God first as the word of God says things should be done. God demands that He must be put first before all things because this is the only way God will continue to help people and that is if they put Him first.

This is what the Lord requires in order for the people to return back to the church and that is for everyone to make God first in their lives. This is what God says is necessary for Him to bless people again and for the church to be blessed again. God is not a man that He should lie and He will do as He said He would do. God also told the Prophet Haggai 2:6 to tell people

This is what the LORD Almighty says: “In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. The silver is mine and the gold is mine,” declares the LORD Almighty. The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,’ says the LORD Almighty. “And in this place I will grant peace,” declares the LORD Almighty.

I believe this is why there is so much discord in our world at this current time and the only way things are going to change is when people and our churches on the whole return to the ways of the Lord. I believe that God has allowed all that is happening because we are not following the ways of the Lord. And if we change our ways then the Lord will go back to blessings His people.

I really want things to back to the way things were in the church. The church used to be overflowing with love. It displayed the love of God. The *agape* love comes with the anointing of God that comes when the person has been endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit. This spirit and *agape* love are rarely spoken about in the church today. This is why it is no wonder that there is so much unrest in the earth and today. The problem in the world today is that people are not depending on God but are depending on themselves. I speak of this because there is only one true love for me and this is the God that I have for God.

I have come to realize that the Children’s Program is not just a Children’s Program but a blessing from God for the church and neighboring community. It is a chosen venue that leads families into the church. In fact, the Children’s Program is a valuable ministry inspired by God that makes the church alive. God has even begun to bring in different types of employees that also need to be ministered to. I have begun to look at things through a spiritual eye which has helped me realize God’s involvement with every aspect of the Children’s Program so there is no need for me to worry because

whoever God wants to will be here. He wants us at the Children's Program because the Children's Program is a place where healing takes place. It is also a place where people can gain life skills and work experience and build their resume because of the various work that is involved with the program.

The results and activities at the church clearly show that the use of the Children's Program was exactly what was needed to bring a change to Mount Zion A. M. E. Church and bridge the existing gap between the church and the neighboring community.

It is amazing how God brought a social ministry into a church that is now extending many social bridges throughout the community, while providing a safe place for children and hurting young adults to restore themselves. On the children's last day off, some of the parents who could not take another day off from their jobs to attend the rally asked if the program could stay open for their children in the morning, and if the children could then be escorted to their schools in the afternoon after the rally and picked up from their various schools at the end of the day. We said yes we would provide the extra service for an additional cost. It is this flexibility makes the Children's Program unique.

On that particular morning the children participated in a circle group discussion followed by prayer. The circle group discussion was really a great success because all of the children really wanted to participate in the discussions that we were talking about various situations some of the children were involved with in their individual lives. It was so amazing to hear the children have so much to say about themselves, giving advice to each other on how they can handle a situation. It was really great to hear the children

Speak and express what they want to talk about and discuss how they feel about a particular situation in their lives.

Children love the program so much because they can express themselves. They can make of their own activities and just enjoy themselves. Since I have become the program's cook I have really come to realize that the children in the program might not get a change to eat so I always tried to think of something the children like when I plan a meal for them. I always think of something different and something healthy along with a great snack that the children would really like to eat. I try to make the children feel as though the program is their second home. I often tell the children that the program and the church is their second home. This is why many of the children will sometimes ask me if they can take off their shoes. I sometimes say yes, and I let them take off their shoes so they can feel at home. But, then I realize that if there was some sort of emergency the children would have to go outside without their shoes and this would not be a good thing.

Since I began cooking in the kitchen for the children I have been able to realize how easy it is to cook and it does not take all day to prepare a good meal which now makes me wonder why some of the cooks took so long. I must enjoy cooking. But then again, I have become interested in watching the *Top Chef*.

Most of the children that attend the program never want to leave. Their parents have to sit and wait for a while to let the children have more time at the program before they are ready to leave. The Children's Program is like a halfway point for children, young adult staff workers and parents who have a need for a place where they can feel safe, a place in a church they can call their own. The Children's Program has been



completely responsible for connecting Mount Zion A. M. E. Church—which is a predominantly black congregation—with many other races and cultural groups.

Who would have known but God is the real reason I was allowed to work at Union Settlement to obtain and retain all of the information in my head on how Union Settlement operated so I could save and help to bring life back to a 90 year old dying congregation. How amazing is God. This is exactly why I was sent to Mount Zion A. M. E. Church. It was to help an aging church make a connection with their community. And the way this was going to happen was through the needs of the church and their neighboring community's for a specific Child Care Service to be developed in the neighboring community of Mount Zion A. M. E.

This project would accommodate the children and their parents. However, we also understand why it is necessary for the church to continue to educate themselves and their members because without higher education and the class I took called “Studying The Congregation” I would not have known how to conduct a preliminary analysis and I would not have known how to do the things my site team and I conducted for Mount Zion A. M. E. Church. This Demonstration Project revealed the importance of conducting a preliminary analysis when seeking to resolve or find a solution for a problem. Having had a class called the “Church and Community” while attending school is what helped to prepare me with the methods of how to proceed in conducting the congregation study and has proven helpful in showing me how to conduct a Preliminary Analysis.

This is what has happened since the development of the Year-Round Children's Program development. The Year-Round Children's Program has proven to be very successful because the project has helped to change most of what was revealed during the

Preliminary Analysis at the church and has helped to connect Mount Zion A. M. E. Church and the community in which it stands in many ways. Developing the Children's Program has given Mount Zion A. M. E. Church an edge; and the edge is what has helped Mount Zion A. M. E. Church to have four families from the Children's Program become members in the church. The church and community has built a relationship with each other that has vastly changed. Mount Zion A. M. E. Church has definitely connected with their neighboring community since the creation of the Children's Program. The church has since become involved with several community activities.

In fact, the church opened its doors to the community after a deadly gas explosion a block away that killed 8 people and destroyed several businesses. As a result of this accident several community members called the church seeking a place to have community meeting for folks involved in the explosion. Pastor Owings stayed late and kept the church doors open for the community to gather to be informed of their options for housing and to fill out claim forms regarding their displacement from their homes. Mount Zion A. M. E. Church was also involved in collecting items from other A. M. E. Churches that were given to community members who lost their homes.

Mount Zion also recruited members from various communities to be a part of a community choir that held a concert at Mount Zion A. M. E. Church this summer. Members of this community choir came from various churches and Mount Zion A. M. E. Church's Year-Round Children's Program which included several of the children's parents who sang along with their children in the community choir. Since the start of the Year-Round Children's Program there has definitely been a renewal of church members as the result of having the children in the building. Just walking down the block with the

children brings conversation with people in the community on a daily basis. Every day coming into the church there are members of the Kingdom Hall sitting outside of their facility who now speak to us just because we see them all the time and we have all become very friendly with each other. I was not easy but it has happened and we are now receiving packages for them and have developed a friendship just by being kind and showing the love and caring for our neighbors which is where the site team wanted to focus our attention. But instead we decided it would be easier to focus on the children because children and their friendliness would help to bring about a change. The children have done just that—the children have changed the situation inside and outside the church in a very positive way in many areas.

April is an employee who left to have a baby, but was unable to return to work because we did not have enough children at the time. However, while taking the children to a park this summer I saw Aril and got her telephone number. Little did I know that I was going to need her sooner than I expected because I had to let someone go. Shortly after seeing April I needed a substitute worker so I called April and asked her to come and work as a sub. April is now a permanent worker at the program. I mentioned to April that we wanted to present ourselves in a very professional manner so she would need to take off the scarf she was wearing. Each day April would say that she was going to take off the scarf but she did not.

But I kept after April to take off the scarf we spoke about the scarf every day until I just went ahead and made an appointment for April to get her hair fixed. In fact, April admitted that she has been wearing the scarf for over three years. I finally realized that April was going to need to be ministered to in order for her to take the scarf off. It was

not too long after that I had to let go of one of my employees. I was later able to rehire April. April was really excited about getting her job back and I was really glad that I was able to get her at the time.

I believe April suffered some kind of depression either after having her baby or over the break-up with her baby's father. I had to talk with April letting her know that as long as she kept the scarf on her head it was a signal that she was stuck in the place from whatever happened to her and when she takes off the scarf it will be the beginning of a healing process. Well, April went and got her hair done it was not an easy process because it was really a big job. When I left April I thought that she would come into the program with her hair looking nice. But instead April came in with a cap on her head turned backwards. I thought she would understand that we want to present ourselves in a professional manner because we work in a church and the children we serve all wear uniforms so no one will feel less-than and to teach these children a different way of life from what their environment at home or community might be. These children's schools are teaching the children in our program a different kind of culture from what it appears April wants to be a part.

I've tried to explain that the children's school is teaching them how to play chess and many activities that teaches them an entirely different culture and I want our program to be a part of that difference because this is the culture their parents want for their children. The employees at the church must carry themselves in a professional manner so Mount Zion A. M. E. Church Year-Round Children's Program will be a part of the children's nurturing culture. It is therefore, very important for the staff to carry themselves in a certain way while in the presence of the children we service. I also went

on to explain to April that she and the other two workers are all in their early twenties and are all parents and they need to carry themselves like parents for their children.

I am pleased to say that April has changed her appearance and she looks beautiful. I wish that I could include some pictures so we can have some before and after pictures of April. She has changed her entire appearance and she is wearing a little makeup with lipstick and I am so proud of the way she looks and how she is carrying herself. The next thing we are working on is getting her to get her teeth fixed. She explained she is afraid of the dentist. I told her that it will only be a little pain that is going to give her a brand new look and she said that she was going to fix it and I am going to keep working with her until she gets her teeth fixed. I'm also talking to April about health insurance and about what thought she is giving to continuing her education because she is 29 and she should be planning for what she is going to do with her life next because her son is almost ready to enter daycare. I told her that she should be planning now with health care because everyone must have health insurance by 2015. I like the fact that April listened very intently to what I was sharing with her. I believe that there is some hope because April does listen to what I say to her.

Kristin is the last to be hired; she is 20 and just recently became a mother. On the first day of work she arrived late and had her grandmother call in for her. Her grandmother gave me a completely different story from what Kristin originally told me she had to take care of before coming to work. She told me she had a 9 o'clock appointment to get her finger prints. Kristin did not show up at 2 p.m. to start work; instead she had her grandmother call in for her. I told her grandmother that Kristin told me she was doing something else in the morning. I also told her grandmother that I hired

Kristin because I like her; but I was also going to teach Kristin some things about working. When Kristin did arrive I told her she should have made the call herself and not be afraid. I also asked her why she did not go to a regular phone to make the call instead of calling her grandmother to make the call. She told me she only had a few minutes left on her phone. I asked her why she did not go to a pay phone to make the call.

Kirstin in return told me she did not have any money. I told her she had to begin saving at least \$10 a week or \$10 from whatever monies she received during the month so she does not walk around without any money in her pockets. She went on to say that she wanted to try and save \$25 dollars a week and that she was going to try to return to school. I told her she was an official adult and she should not have anyone call in for her she should call and explain her situation for herself.

I explained to the workers that we serve working parents and they should pay attention to the kind of parents we serve in our program. So they will understand that the parents expect them to carry themselves in a professional manner and look professional; they are role models even if they don't want to be—they represent the church with the type of service we provide to the community. I also explained that the parents pay \$85 a week for service from us and \$45 a day for Wednesday and because of this the parents expect a certain amount of professionalism from us and even if they didn't we should want to provide top service to represent ourselves. I also asked my workers to think back when they went to school and their parents came to the school looking a certain way how it affected them. I told them that this is exactly how the children feel when they come over to the children's school to pick the children up. I explained that the children felt the same way wanting a professional worker coming to pick them up from school. The

children don't want to have someone picking them up that looks any kind of way because this embarrasses the children.

I had a meeting with my pastor and explained to her how I have new insight regarding the program and the ministry I conduct downstairs in the lower level at the Children's Program. I told my pastor that we should bring in someone that can give the workers life skills because there are a lot of things about life these workers really don't understand. My pastor agreed because we see everyone in the program as candidates to minister to. We are therefore going to look into bringing in someone to begin teaching these young adults life skills.

A little girl's mother had already called into the after school program to say she was going to pick up her little girl to take her the dentist office. When the little girl was sent to the bathroom by herself her mother took the girl home with her. And when the worker returned the little girl was not there. This situation created a nightmare for the program. I ran over to the school because one worker returned to the program to explain what happened—he was by himself with 14 children, which was not safe because he had to cross the street with all those children by himself. The person who sent the little girl to the bathroom by herself clearly created the problem and apparently needed to be trained—which is an indication that her references were possibly false and should be checked.

This is clearly an indication that this person and the entire staff need to be trained in the area of safety. This clearly shows that this particular worker's resume must have passed through the system and was not checked. This is also an indication that all employees must be trained in various areas after they complete their probationary period.

I say after they complete their probationary period because a lot of employees don't pass their probationary period. Writing this portion of the paper is allowing me to see that it is possible that I should begin to think about changing how I select people to work at the program. But when the program needs employees I think about who I know that is in need of a job first. I think about who needs a job and then I check out their background because most of the people I think of for the job don't have criminal backgrounds.

Now I see that I must have them trained in various areas. But this can only happen after they pass their probationary period because the church has limited funds and it would be a waste of money. This is why this particular person has not been trained. Sending people to be trained in various areas before they pass their probationary period is wasting money that the program does not have so we therefore want to see if the person really is interested in the job first. Because what I notice is some people will say they want to work until they get a job and then they begin to take off days without giving notice. This is a terrible practice because it leaves everyone unprepared for their absence.

We are grateful that two out of three new employees are good hard workers that really want to work and are always on time and willing to help out in any way they can to keep the business going. These are the type of workers that I can appreciate; workers that enjoy their job and that can really use the money and really like working with the children. It makes a big difference whether you are just working for a check or when you're working because what you're doing makes a big difference.

This is why employees were coming and going like a revolving door. I had to keep the program going for the children, their parents, the church and the neighboring community—this program is a great asset for many and it must continue to evolve. One



reason in particular is a new student who has been at the program for maybe three or four months. And I just noticed that she is in the third grade and she cannot read. This really disturbed me that this child cannot read. I immediately wanted to know how it is possible for this child to be in the third and cannot read? Since I found this out I told her mother that I'm going to work with her to help her learn how to read. I must admit that I am a little tough; but I believe that I must be a little tough because if I am not people will take advantage of me.

Amber is planning to return after the birth of her baby. A young man who is a friend of my daughter who is a college graduate and is out of work agreed to work in Amber's position until Amber returns. He moved from New Jersey because he wanted to be closer to my daughter. He found a job here in the city but the job did not work out for him. So I asked Craig if he would work with us until he found another job and he said yes. This gives Craig the opportunity to look for work in the morning while he works with the Children's Program in the afternoon, earning money he can use as carfare to go look for work. This is a great reason to have a Children's Program at the church where people who are out of work can work while looking for permanent work. Craig has also agreed to stay with us and work as a temporary worker when it is time for our other expectant mother to go out to have her baby. So we were able to keep Craig working as a substitute until he finds another job.

We are so glad to have come to a point where we can also hire temporary workers to fill position at Mount Zion A. M. E. Church. Hiring temporary workers helps to keep the business going. Keeping the business going is my main objective at this particular point. This is why I will hire almost anyone that really wants to work. This is also why I

will work in any position to keep the business going. This is the reason I pick up children, cook and do whatever it takes to keep the program going because the program is so important to the church and neighboring community. I am grateful that God is allowing me to maintain the program.

Part of the ministry that is very difficult is trying to work with people in the community with limited education to help and encourage them to want to go back to school and become better parents to their children. I sometimes wonder if I'm fooling myself thinking these young adults want more for themselves.

The second variable group used in this Demonstration Project is the young adult staff such as Chashee, Amber, April, Kim, Joseph Franklyn, and Aneika—my staff who work so very hard at keeping the Children's Program alive and working. It is because of these two groups—the young adults and children—that I can truly say we have helped bring change to Mount Zion A. M. E. Church. These two components are what made this project a success because of their effect on others. I truly believe God used the children, young adult staff and their quirkiness on the members of this very unfriendly church who are now calling children by nicknames they have given the children and young adult staff members. I really believe the children and young adult staff helped to change a great deal of the members who come into contact with the children and young adult staff who work in the program.

I've been in Mount Zion A. M. E. Church for 8 years. This is actually the longest I have ever been in a church and I've been waiting for God to give me my release. I said I would never just leave another church unless God had given me the green light. However, a couple of months ago my pastor called me and said that another pastor from

Greater Bethel A. M. E. Church needed help and wanted to know if I would come and work with their young people on the third Sunday. I have to be completely honest but I asked my pastor if she was trying to get rid of me and she said she knew I was going to say that. Well, anyway I said yes I would help out at this new church because one of the church's ministers had recently died. I agreed but I never really understood just how it happens that I was sent over to Greater Bethel A. M. E. Church. But I always believe that God is always involved in whatever occurs in our lives.

I was a little uncertain at first because for me there is a big difference working with children from the street than there is working with children in the church. I find that I work better with secular children. Well, anyway once I got over to the church I found that the pastor's daughter works with the children and she really does a great job. So I'm now at this church and I'm not working with the children, I'm helping out during the morning worship service. The pastor told my pastor she needed help because she had to do everything herself although she has a local minister in the church. But the pastor was not able to go away because there was not another itinerant minister in her church

Each church must have an itinerant minister who can consecrate the sacraments and conduct Communion on first Sunday in the absence of the minister. So I believe this is the reason I am at this church so the pastor will be able to get the opportunity to get a vacation and have help when she needs to get away. However, the problem is that I really don't see that the pastor needs help because the local minister at this church does everything. In fact I mentioned this to the pastor and she said this was not happening before I got to the church. What a dilemma; but the pastor really likes me, and she has told her church that I'm there because she wants me there.

While typing my first 25 pages I began to remember I use to go to this new church when I was a little girl. I did not remember this until I began to write; then all of a sudden I began to remember going to this church. I called my sister who is a couple of years older than me and asked her if she remembered going to this church and my sister said yes. There used to be a woman by the name of Ms. Mickey that bought me and my sister to this church. While talking to my oldest sister she told me that she used to sing in a choir at this church. The entire process has really left me speechless and really attempting to do exactly what Hebrew 4 says, that we must pay very close attention to what we hear.

## CHAPTER 5 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The implementation of the Mount Zion Year-Round Children's Program went just as planned. The staff had to be able to be fingerprinted and have a SCR state clearance. After this the plan was to pick up from most or all of the schools in our immediate area—we currently provide escort service from 10 schools. The Children's Program was created to be a second venue for bringing people into the church. The only difference is our main focus was placed on children between the ages of 5 thru 12 years old. The reason we placed our focus on children between the ages of 5 thru 12 years old is because this would also bring in young parents into a church that is in desperate need of younger congregants. The second reason the Children's Program was created is to bring the neighboring community and Mount Zion A. M. E. Church people in the church into a working relationship—where the church is not just standing on the corner but the church is an active partner with the community. Since the start of the Children's Program several families have joined the church as well as a few staff members.

The Children's Program greatly surpassed our expectations and is currently a great service to the neighboring community and family members. The Children's Program is a real blessing to the church and a blessing for the parents as well. Parents get more than they expected to get from the Year-Round Children's Program.

The children are picked up and brought back to a safe environment where they get a snack and a hot meal at the end of their school day. The reason the children receive a hot meal is because most of their parents arrive to pick up their children around 6 p.m. from the program. The children also have Bible study every Wednesday down in the lower level of the church sitting in a circle. The children discuss any problem they might have had in school that their parents have told us about. At Mount Zion A. M. E. Year-Round Children's Program we always attempt to help parents and children with any problems they might be experiencing. If it is the child we sit in the circle and let the child's peers hear about what's going on with the student; then we have the student that is having the problem or misbehaving in any way select a child from the circle to tell them how they should handle the situation or tell the child why their behavior is incorrect. We find that children will always listen to their peers. We find that this is a great way to get the children to correct their behavior when they are having problems in their schools.

We have reached our capacity of children allowed by the department of buildings and we are pleased that all is going well. We have managed to institute all of the plans we had for the Children's Program. We currently have a great dependable staff working with the children. And I say this because for a while there was a revolving door in the area of staff. I am pleased to say that we now have a great team working with the children. We have a team of responsible workers working with the children who appreciate having a job and appreciate working.

The staff that I currently have is not afraid to work and they all want their jobs. If I could find a cook who really wants a job not off the books but on the books my staff would be complete. The only good thing about cooking in the kitchen is that it has

allowed me to see just how long it should take to get the meal ready for the children.

Before I had the opportunity to work in the kitchen the cooks that worked for the program made it seem that cooking took so long. But I have found that if you know what you are doing and if you get in there and get out it does not take long to prepare a meal.

I now can tell my next cook that I cooked for the program for several months and it really is not hard to prepare for the children. I also found that the children like children's meals which are really not hard to prepare. All the cook has to do is to think about what children like to eat. When the thought is given to what children like to eat it is a pleasure to prepare the meal for the children. Every other cook we had at the program made it appear that it was a real chore but working as the cook preparing the meals is very quick and easy.

If I were getting paid for cooking it would be another thing but I am not getting paid for cooking. I am getting paid for being a director, and for some reason my Pastor does not think that I should get a raise because I am cooking. In fact, she thinks everything I do I should do and not look for a raise because I am the director of the program. She really appears to have forgotten that I am the founder of the Children's Program.

Since the Children's Program has been incorporated my pastor does what she wants the way she wants and I work as an employee. I do the extra things that I do because I am the founder and really want the program to succeed. So I give my all knowing that I am blessed by God and I realize that only what you do will last and also allow God to see your good works. I am currently pleased to announce that the Children's Program is really helping the church out and this is exactly why we created the

Children's Program. It was because we wanted to help the church bring in new members which has happened; and we wanted the church to connect with the community in which it stands, and this has also happened. In fact it is because of the Children's Program that the soup kitchen and food pantry community that come in the church each week are being evangelized by the Children's Program.

It was reported to us by the head of the food pantry that some of the community people that come into the church for the soup kitchen and food pantry came and told her that they really enjoyed the children's writings that are placed on the bulletin board in the lower level of the church. This finally allowed us to get the word to the community that comes into the church each week. We wanted to be able to minister to this group of people but did not really know how we could do it. But God knew how to do it and it appears that the community is being evangelized when they come into the church. While standing on line waiting to be served they are reading the writings that the children are writing from our weekly Wednesday Bible study.

This is a good thing; is it very pleasing to see just how many people we are evangelizing to from the children's work. I am told that we feed over 200 hundred people during the week. This is another reason why we work as hard as we do down in the lower level of the church. And we realized it is because of the Children's Program that things have changed around Mount Zion A. M. E. Church. Children bring laughter, noise, and happiness into the church and it is a great thing to do the work of the Lord. And God honors those who work and help his people.

This is why we work so hard with the children because this gives us the opportunity to plant a seed in a child that just might make difference when the child



grows up because I am a believer that it takes a village to raise a child. I see how my God has allowed me to raise two wonderful children. If I can also help to raise and have input in other children's lives then it is worth the work that we do at the Children's Program.

It's a great thing to be able to say that you help a parent with their children; it is a great thing to work in the house of the Lord. But what is more rewarding is to have all of these children in the church that we can help to train. And God has shown me that this is the new church within the church and what makes this so different is that it is a new prophetic imagination ministry. It is called this because this ministry comes from the imagination of the prophetess inspired by God. It is a different ministry from the ministry that I did in my original church because this is a secular outreach ministry that is attempting to bring in children into the church.

The children are in the church five days a week, giving us access to both the children and their parents if we know how to evangelize them. This non-traditional ministry uses the traditional values of God in a non-traditional manner, reaching children and their parents in a different way, but still bringing them both into the church

This shows that there are other means of taking people into the house of God other than on a Sunday. It would be great if other people in the church came up with other ideas of how to make the church grow to save the life of the church. I believe that in order for this to happen we must be able to listen and hear God speaking to us. God had been speaking to me for some time about this project. I believe it could only come to be when God wanted it to come to be, and where God wanted this to be because before this I was never given the opportunity to put this vision into place. When God is in the plan things are successful.

The next thing is adding the extension to the current project and I already know what it is because one of the children in the Children's Program parents came to me and asked if we would be able to provide pickup service for her younger daughter who is going to the same school next year. The parents told me that the school that we pick up from now is going to start accepting Pre-K children in the school next year. I told her that we would be able to pick up her second child next year. So we now have to check to make sure we can pick up her younger child next year. This means this is the extension that I wanted to add to the program. Now our planning has to begin and we can start by checking to make sure that we have all of the necessary requirements to have Pre-K children in our program. The next thing we will need to do is get the building inspected so the department of building will let us have a larger capacity that will allow Mount Zion A. M. E. Church to allow more children into the program. Following that we will need to inquire if there is any additional training that is needed to prepare us for Pre-K.

I am thankful that this parent asked me because it gave me a head start in finding out the necessary detail to prepare for the Pre-K children that we will pick up from school next year. This jump start has helped Mount Zion bring more resources into the church. The program currently has revenues of \$2,000 a week and a net profit of \$1,600 a month. So having Pre-K children in the building will increase the revenue even more and allow the Children's Program to reach more children for God and plant more seeds into more children. We believe that teaching the word of God to the children and staff is what told Jesus told us to do in The Great Commission.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matt. 28:19-20).

We are down in the lower level of the church teaching the word of God because I realize that I am and truly blessed by God. I realize that God is always in the plan and I also realize that God Has continuously blessed me to be able to create a project that would also in turn bless me and allow me to make a weekly salary. I am so grateful for this great blessing from God because it has allowed me to do a great thing for God who has turned right around and blessed me.

I thank God each day for this blessing in my life and how God has allowed the site team and me to work on the Lord's behalf in a church that has stood in the community for 94 years. Not only has God allowed me to create a project but God has also allowed me to be a part of something in the community that people can see and have respect for God and the work that is being done in God's church that gives God the honor and the glory. What a wonderful thing to work in the field for kingdom building.

Having the program in this community has brought two young ladies from a building directly across the street into the church. The first was a young lady who first came to work with us as a summer youth worker who later came back to work with as a regular worker. This young lady was an excellent worker and the skills and references that she acquired working at the Children's Program have landed a job at Harlem Hospital. The second young lady came to church from across the street. She told me that she had lived across the street for 12 years and the day she came was the first time she was ever in the church.

This young lady came to the church to pick up an application to put her daughter into the Children's Program. Since she had never been in the building before, I asked her if she wanted to go upstairs and see the classroom. It was a pleasure to have someone

from across the street come into the church. I believe this is what the program was created for: is to let the community know that the church is there for them. The young lady took the application and soon we will be picking up her child from a neighboring school and teaching her the word of God.

It is a good thing to see community people coming over to the church for various things that the church can and should be supplying. So far three summer youth workers have come back to the church and have worked in the church in some capacity. I think it is a great thing when a neighboring church can be of service to their community. The Children's Program was created so the church can be of some kind of help to community members.

It is amazing how many ideas God has given me to put into place for the community. And it is a wonderful thing for me to be able to have another summer youth worker come back to work at the Children's Program. It was amazing what he said that I contacted him at the right time. It almost sounds as if he was getting ready to get involved with something he should not have. So I thank God for tracking this young person down to give him a job.

Most of the young adults working at the Children's Program are young adults that I already knew and I had to go to their homes to find them or to call their mothers if I still had their parents phone to get them to come to work at the program. Most of the workers were former summer youth workers, but sometimes I met some of them walking down the street and asking if they needed a job or wanted to work. The last person I just hired is a Hispanic young lady that I knew when I used to work in the school many years ago. We passed on the block while she was walking her dog, we passed each other and I said

hello. After we walked pass each other something told me to ask her if she needed a job. I could not call her by name because I did not know her name. But I was obedient and turned around and just said “hey,” and she turned around and I signaled to her to come toward me. She did and I asked her if she was working and she said no. I told her about the job and told her when she should come over to the church. Little did I know, but she lived right around the corner from the church. She told me as she was coming down on the elevator that she prayed to God for a job just before she ran into me.

We believe a church in the community should be for community residents. The program is growing because program participants are referring the Children’s Program to their friends and their friends are referring their friends to the Children’s Program. All of this happens because of the service and care we provide their children. We provide excellent care and service to the children in the Children’s Program. We also allow parents to have birthday parties for their children in the lower level of the church. We have also allowed use of the church to parents who have lost a loved one and whose children attend the Children’s Program.

Meeting families’ needs is our goal at Mount Zion A. M. E. Having created the Children’s Program with this type of mindset is what has allowed the Children’s Program to build solidarity with many people in our community; payment is tailored to the individuals, and we accept a variety of payment types. In the end, we are all one community striving to educate our children in a safe environment.

The creation of the year-Round Children’s Program has really bought forth solidarity in the neighboring community because not only does Mount Zion feed the community with its soup kitchen and food pantry, but it now serves the community

children and their parents. This has really bridged a great gap in the community between all community members and the schools in the region.

After events that are held at the church for the Children's Program, organizations have left food for us to give the children for lunch the next day. This is how God wants His people to treat each other and that is with love in the names of Jesus. This is brotherly love when you can feed God's sheep. I can really say having the Children's Program in the church has really changed things both inside and outside the church.

Since the beginning of the Children's Program, the Kingdom Hall right next to the church and Mount Zion A. M. E. Church has really come together. The two organizations now accept packages for one another from UPS, and even clean the sidewalks for each other. When an event outside leaves the area dirty, both organizations will clean up together. This is not how it was before the Children's Program began. It is good to see that something that was inspired by God has brought people in the community together as one. Before the Children's Program was created there was no solidarity. Now both organizations can be found sitting out in front greeting people as they walk by.

On any given day you can walk by Mount Zion A. M. E. Church and find trustees sitting in front of the church and on any given day you can find trustees sitting outside of Kingdom Hall. And all speak to one another. In fact, on Sunday there was an afternoon program at the church and when the Pastor from the church got up to speak he mentioned one our trustees. The pastor said whenever he passed the church he always saw Brother Coverinton sitting outside the church in a chair.

There is something about children that brings change and we have taught the children to speak when they come into the church. If the children forget to speak we

make the children go back up the stairs and come back down and say good morning or good afternoon or just a simple hello. Having the Children's Program in the church has really helped the church members to change and has given them more to do around the church. In fact, it is very busy around the church every day since the Children's Program is at full capacity.

The parents and staff communicate well with each other and there is a sense of solidarity all around both inside and outside of the church. This is how God wants His people to behave with each other and this behavior is love. I'm certain that God is well pleased with the change that has occurred at Mount Zion A. M. E. Church since the start of the program. Before the Children's Program began there were hardly any children in the church and people were just not friendly. But since the start of the Children's Program a great deal has changed around the church. When the children are having an event of some sort even people from the church come to the children's performances. There has definitely been a coming together that has occurred at the church since the Children's Program has begun. The church has incorporated the children and family service theme of the Children's Program, emphasizing the need to help children and their families in any way we can. The church has embraced the Children's Program and realizes how important the Children's Program is to the church.

The trustees are now on call all during the day. There is always a trustee on call at the church to provide whatever service might be needed. In fact, whenever the Department of Health comes in and inspects the church and says there are repairs that need to be corrected, the trustees act very fast in calling in someone to make the needed repairs. If there is a problem with heat or any maintenance, the trustees make sure things

are in place for the Children's Program. During the winter months when there is snow on the ground the trustees always make sure they come over to the church and clear the way for the children and their parents to get into the church.

I mention this because we always make sure that we are open for parents that have to get to work. Even when the snow is high and the schools are closed, we will open so that parents are able to get to work. When there is a great amount of snow, we listen to the radio to see if schools are closed. If the schools are closed and there are parents that must get to work, we make sure that we open.

On days like these, I can count on Brother Smith being out in front of the church making the way clear not only for the children and their parents but also for people passing the church because we do not need to be sued. The program is successful because the building is kept very clean. When parents come by to see the facility it is always very clean because Brother Smith and the rest of the trustees keep the church very clean. Having a clean church definitely attracts people who want to have their children in a clean environment.

Mount Zion A. M. E. Church Year-Round Children's Program has just the right name "Another Choice." It really does provide another choice of service to the community. It is the type of service that is tailor-made for each individual child and parent. This is what makes the program special and we really try to service everyone. This includes our employees who eat whatever the children eat. Our employees do not have to worry about not having lunch or dinner if they do not have money left over from their pay checks. They also get most of the major holidays off with pay and this is something most *per diem* employees do not get provided. We do this because we know



that most of our employees do not make that much money because they work part-time hours.

We also encourage our employees to go back to school and finish their education. Most of our employees have GEDs or have only graduated from High School and we have one that is still working on his GED. We at Mount Zion A. M. E. Church really make every attempt to get these young people to go back to school. We hire them to put money in their pockets that can help them to get to and from their schools. We are always stressing the importance of education in their lives.

I, myself, was a drop-out from school for a week. At the time I had only failed one minor and one major and was left back and was not supposed to be left back. I was so upset that I began to say out of school until they sent a littler telling my mother that I was seventeen plus and they could put me out of school. My oldest sister Ruth took me down to 110 Kensington Street and put me back into school. It is what my sister did for me that I am trying to do for others, even if the results of education do not take you in the direction you expect.

Although, I am not a good writer, I was able to get back in school and become a good teacher and an example to others who have not finished their education, but can still get themselves back in school and finish their education as well. My sister and I have a joke that once I got back in school, I never stopped going. I currently have a Master of Science; a Master of Administration and Supervision; a Master of Divinity; and am currently working and praying to graduate this summer with a Doctor of Ministry. Instead I used the skills and materials I had to start the Children's Program in the lower level of

the church. And after all these years, I believe God is ready to vindicate me because of the work I have done for the church.

The Children's Program is a ministry that believes in people and in God and in what is possible for those that believe in God. There is a secret of what God can do and what He does for others He will certainly do for those who trust and believe in him. I can really say that I have been blessed by God. And I know that all of these things that I have done and all of the things that I am currently involved in, I know without doubt that they are all because of God and nothing is because of me. I know it is God that has given me that strength to continue to push forward. And I know that it is God that has allowed me to be able to pay for my education. I am so grateful for all that God has done for me and all that God is doing for me.

God has also blessed me with a wonderful husband that has my back and makes it possible for me to be able to use all of my monies on my education. This is truly a blessing that I do realize comes from the Lord. I realized that all of my blessings come from God. I will never stop thanking God for all that He has done for me and all that He is doing for me. I would have been able to continue to do what I am currently doing without the Grace and Mercy of God and I am ever so Grateful to God for His Grace and His mercy.

I never really wanted to have a Children's Program in the church. I always wanted to be in a public school but God wanted me right where I am. When I first began to teach, I attempted and failed to pass the Academic Literacy Skills Test (ALST) exam, which is a requirement in order to become a certified teacher in the city of New York as well as the ATSW Elementary Component. After work at a Children's Program that offers a Pre-K

training class and after taking that class I was able to pass the ATSW test, but missed passing the ALSAT by one point. The grade needed to pass the test is 220 and I received 219. In 2002, all teachers who did not pass the test were asked to leave the system, and I had to leave the school and a job that I loved very much.

One day, I was listening to the radio in the Children's Program because we always have the radio on playing music for the children as it makes the children more relaxed. Suddenly I heard a broadcast that said if you worked for the education department during specific years you must file a claim form before December 30, 2014. I could not believe my ears. I remembered going to a meeting with a friend many years ago and signing a sheet that they had circulating the room. This must have placed me in the new class action suit that was won all these years after and I am now going to receive the benefits after all these years. The court ruled that the reason blacks and Hispanics could not pass the test is because the test was biased and that the DOE must pay back salary to all of the teachers that were working for the board during the time and were released because of test scores.

I admit that I really never wanted to be in the church the way that I am now. But I always thought that after I completed what God wanted from me I knew that God was going to let me pass the ALST. I always knew and I always told my husband that this is what was going to happen. I told my husband that I believed once I finished what God wanted me to do for Him which was going to seminary so I could become more educated that I believed God would allow me to pass the ALST test so I could become a licensed teacher. I never would have thought that I would receive such a blessing like this. I am now going to be paid for all of the years that I took that test and could not pass that test. I

can just cry but I won't because God has truly made me a better person. Not only am I going to be reimbursed for all of those years, including medical and medication expenses, but I also have the opportunity to get my job back as a school teacher with seniority and all the rights of a teacher.

I always believed I was not selected because I had not passed the ALST test, and not getting the jobs that I interviewed for was very hurtful to me. But I now see that God was always making the plans and not me. It pleases me to know that I was right about what God was going to do but I never would have imagined that God would do something like this for me. I am so grateful because all my life God has been there for me even when I did not understand what God had planned for me and for my children. I am so grateful to God for all that he has allowed to happen in my life to make me a better person.

I had completely forgotten about the situation. I'm not going to say that I did not feel bad about not being able to pass the test because I did and it did bother me to not be able to be in the school system that was my first love. But the fact that I never become certified that did bother me. I now know for sure that God wanted me right where I am because I was needed to start this wonderful service for the good of the community. It's such a pleasure to have God use you for God's purpose and not for your own purpose. It is amazing to look and see how God used me and my site team to institute this project that created a wonderful experience that the children that attend the Children's Program

What appeared to be a small service was actually a very large assignment because I now feel as though this was my purpose in life. I don't know how other people see this project or this effort but I see as a calling from God and the reason I see this project as a

calling from God is because God has supplied all of the need to make this project and this effort possible.

Even the laptop that I now type on is a blessing of God. My regular computer was always giving me problems and then my computer just went out. I took it to the computer shop to be fixed but it still did not work and the young man at the shop told me to bring it back. But I was so busy that I just could not bring it back. I finally got myself to take the computer back to the shop. But when I got the computer back to my house it still did not work.

One day when I came home my neighbor next door rang my bell and said that UPS delivered a box for me but there was no one at home so she took the box in for me. The box had all of my information on the box my address and my apt number. But I never opened the box. I left it sitting near my front door for over six months. I had boxed my broken computer and waited for UPS to pick it up, which they never did. I decided to open the UPS box that was sent instead. After nine months I decided to open the box. Inside the box was another box inside like those Russian dolls, and inside the smallest box was a Dell laptop. I still do not know who sent me this laptop. I told my family that God sent me this laptop and no one could ever tell me that God did not send it and no one can tell me that God does not want me to receive this degree because God has really supplied all of my needs in every step of the way and I am truly humbled by what God has shown me through the grace and mercy He shows for those He loves.

God continues to show me just how much He cares for me; and when I think of things God has done for me I can cry because I know without a shadow of a doubt that there is a God that I know loves me. He shows me how much he cares for me each and

every day and I am not afraid of life or anything that might face me because I know that God loves me. I now know that my entire life has been planned for me and if I continue to do as God directs me and orders my step. Everything, not some things will be alright.

Creating the Children's Program has helped to make Mount Zion A. M. E. Church an active ministry for the people of the neighboring community each and every day. I am proud to have created a project that has given the church back its rightful place in the community. Actively tending to the care of the community is what God's church should be, a church that is there for the community each and every day. It is our civil and sacred duty to create a global project that is not just for the church but also for the good of people outside the church and inside of the church.

The fun thing about this entire process is that I kept saying that I did not want to be a pastor and little did I know that God would sneak in and make me a non-traditional pastor. God has made me the pastor of a child's program that is going strong for God and strong for the people of the community. Because of this new prophetic imagination working downstairs, the church is healthier upstairs.

In the future, I hope that the pastor of Mount Zion A. M. E. Church and I can come up with a plan of how to can fix the upstairs part of her church so we can have a very large area in the church where the Children's Program can grow to its full capacity. We could then have a Pre-K program downstairs and move the school-age program upstairs. This would be a dream come true for the community and for the church.

I am also grateful for the things God has allowed me to do; things that I never thought I could do. God has allowed me to see that I am not a worthless person. God has allowed me to build a business and to help a church get itself back in right relations. This

has truly been a blessing and I am so happy to be able to help other people who are like I was before God came into my life and changed me. I know if God can do all that he has done for me, God can and will do it for others. I know that the same things can happen for those that God has sent into my life and those God has solaced in the Children's Program. By whatever venue they come into the program doors, I know that God has brought them there for a purpose and I know that God can change things for them just like God has changed and fixed things for me. So whenever someone enters or calls the Children's Program I will be there for them just like God was there for me. And I will put my all and all in attempting to help all of those that God places in my path because I know what God can do from my personal experience.

The theologian Walter Rauschenbusch was a white Baptist Minister, once said that the church had two voices.<sup>8</sup> I take this to mean that church was talking from both sides of its mouth. Mount Zion A. M. E. Church has stopped speaking with two voices, but has one voice that is being directed into the community where it should be directed and that is helping the community. The community has heard the one voice of Mount Zion saying to them, "We are here to help you because we love you and we care about what happens with you. Come and let us work together in helping the things that God has called you to do."

Walter Rauschenbusch focused on the social gospel movement. In his eleven-year ministry, he focused on those who lived in the tenement areas of New York City and his ministry was a ministry just like my ministry which is why I am so stuck on him.<sup>9</sup> Coming

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<sup>8</sup> Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: Macmillan, 1917), 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

across the ministry of Walter Rauschenbusch helped me to really understand the kind of minister I am. Until coming across Mr. Rauschenbusch I thought that I was not really called. Rauschenbusch showed me the social ministry of Jesus in a new way, so I now know that my ministry is a ministry called and chosen by God.

This makes me very happy because I love the ministry that I was called into. And I also love that I can be myself. I now understand why I seem to get depressed at church when I see that most people do not really know real ministry. For if they knew they would ask, as I paraphrase John F. Kennedy, not what your church can do for you but, what the church can do for the country. I think if more people would ask that question, the churches across the nation would be alive and kicking.

I love this ministry because it definitely reminds me of what Jesus was doing when he walked the earth. Jesus did not stay inside a synagogue Jesus was outside in the street helping people and meeting whoever came across His path. This is the kind of ministry I love and want to be a part of and not the kind of ministry where people just come to church and sit without a focus on what they can do to help someone other than themselves. This is what we really want to get across to those that sit in our congregations.

For the last seven months I have been sitting with a congregation that is not my own, because I was loaned out to the church when one of their ministers passed a few months ago. I actually enjoyed being over at this other church for a while because it was a little refreshing to have a change of pace. But I still work in the Children's Program and worship at my original church. I taught Sunday school at my church and helped carry out the worship at the other church. I stayed at the other church instead of just helping out on



the third Sunday and was told that I was going there to work with the children. I realized and told them that I really work well with children that are not in the church, but the pastor's daughter at the other church really works well with the children.

I stayed at the other church for seven months and I enjoyed being there. But while I was there things started happening at my church and the people were telling me that the pastor really needed my help. I don't know what happened, but the ministers that were there when I was sent on loan were no longer there. My pastor had to tend to her family members and she was really going through a hard time at the church. She would not tell me that she needed my help but the people at the church began to tell me that they really needed to have me back at the church.

So I returned to my church, and a lot of people said they missed me and also said that my pastor needed me to come back. I think I helped the situation at the other church because I did not appear that I was really needed because the other minister there actually did everything and I was just sitting there. I did not see why their pastor said she needed help. The minister worked very hard and did everything, so I did not have a chance to do anything except give my tithes and pray.

I knew it was time for me to go back and help my pastor at my church and every time I went to my church people were saying she really needed me to be there with her. She never said it to me and I knew that she would not say it to me. I went to her and told her I was going to return because the people were telling me that she needed me at the church and she said "ok." I told the other pastor that whenever she needed me or needed to go out of town that I would come and be at the church in her absence. She was a little upset but she said she understood because a lot of things were going on with my pastor

and her family. I am officially back at my church and working downstairs and cooking for the Children's Program because I cannot find a cook who wants to work on the books. Everyone I ask about working always ask me if the job in on the books or off the books.

So I am the program cook and I have been doing this for some time now. I've been cooking for so long that I am beginning to like cooking for the children and most of the time the children enjoy what I prepare for them. It has been some journey. I've been managing the program, working in the kitchen and still picking up children from school. This is what I do to keep the program running and operating as it should because the show must go on. This has been a very busy year, and I know that it has only been God that has allowed me to do all that I do.

I can't believe that I was serving two different churches while working at the Children's Program and typing and working at the same time. I also had two employees out of work having babies. One has returned to work. We are not taking back the other employee because her work ethic and attitude are not what we are looking for. She also did not bring in medical documentation required by the Health Department which could result in a violation and a fine for the church. What we do not understand is why this employee could not get the necessary documentation especially after working at the Children's Program for over 9 months.

This is not what we want to happen at the Children's Program. We like to be able to help people for a little while when they are out of work. We have had a lot of people who were unemployed stay with us until they could get work. We hired them so they could have money in their pocket until they got themselves new jobs. Many of the people we did this for really appreciated being able to make a little money for carfare until they

got back on their feet. One employee who is working with the Children's Program to hold a position for one of the expected moms, but is now staying until he finds a permanent position.

Both of my children have worked at the Children's Program in between jobs. My son is now a Dean of students in an alternative High school, and my daughter works for TED and is making a very good salary. We want to employ people who really want to work and really appreciate their job and who want to build skills to better themselves. We know that many businesses won't give people with limited skills a chance to work if they had not finished their education or fit a certain profile.

This is why we at the Mount Zion A. M. E. Year-Round Children's Program want to give people the chance to get themselves together so they can then go to other companies prepared with skills and a degree. The program is designed to provide a service to the community, give people who are having a bit of a struggle the opportunity to get back on their feet. I can honestly say at this point that we have employees who are working hard to make the Children's Program a success and are working hard to get their lives back together, fixing whatever they need to correct in their lives in order to survive.

And this is what Jesus was doing in the vineyard, coming into contact with people, giving them the word and helping them. And this is what we are attempting to do through the Children's Program, helping as many people as we can; and when we do this we know that we are doing the work God. Working with children can help further their education. It can also prepare one for a teaching career if the person has the right mindset. Teaching is a field that will always be in demand.

These are the hopes we have for those that work at the Children's Program. It is the hope that that it will inspire them to continue their education and use the experience they received from working at the Children's Program to find something better, using the work experiences and skills they learn while working at the program. This is what we know has worked for other employees that start out at the Children's Program. These former employees were able to build a resume and gain skills that they could use to get themselves a better job. Workers were able to get better jobs working at hospitals and schools. Workers who receive public assistance can become transitional recipients because they are working and they can begin to work and receive benefits and begin to look for an apartment.

I mentioned to the pastor that having a registration for a master barber class to be held at Mount Zion A. M. E. Church would be a good idea for a project to get started at the church. This would give unemployed young men a skill and an opportunity to start their own business. I thought that the young men that I see standing out in the street near the grocery around the corner could all put their monies together and rent an empty location and turn it into a barbershop. All of their friends that I see standing around with them on Fridays and Saturdays could come and support them by being their customers. I think this is a great next project that would benefit the neighboring community.

It is exciting to see a young person thinking as I am thinking about starting a business. I do believe this is the way to make it in New York City especially since there are not that many jobs available. As new jobs open up, however, we plan to print out all of the available jobs and place the list on the bulletin board downstairs in the lower level of the church in clear view to anyone who is looking for work. A couple of months ago

the Pastor gave food vouchers that were given to her by an organization that was distributing food and Avon products to parents who came into pick up their children. All the parents had to do was sign a list saying they were going to pick up the food and they were given food vouchers to go a particular location where the food was going to be given out. Many of the parents from the program received these food vouchers.

Yesterday, near the end of the day, we received a pleasant surprise when one of the children who used to attend the Children's Program came by the church with her grandfather. After she hugged me they turned to leave, I asked how I could help them and her grandfather said they came because she wanted to say hello. I spoke with her mother by phone and she said she just wanted to apologize for the way her little girl left the program so fast and that she did not give prior notice that her daughter was not going to attend the program any longer. I said it was ok and she went on to wish me happy holidays. I in return told her mother that we were there if she ever needed our service again. I said this because with the economy as it is people have to do what they need to do for their particular situation. It would have been good if she had given us prior notice but a situation presented itself and she did what she thought was good for her situation.

I also know that the children will be going out for the winter vacation soon and this parent is probably going to need us to keep her children, and will return to ask if we will keep her daughter for the week that her daughter is going to be out of school. If this is what she needs we will keep her daughter for her during the winter break because the Children's Program was designed to make things easier for working parents

One of the reasons we are in business is to bridge the gap and provide a service to those who are in need of our service. I now see that the purpose of this demonstration

project was put into place to help people think differently about humankind and to show us how we can help each other; and to teach students the skills that will help them. This is why our focus was constantly placed on this being a global project.

This process really helped me personally in so many ways. This project has shown me just how capable I am. And working this project has helped me to learn a great many things that I did not know about before and would never have learned about had I not had to be a part in designing a demonstration project that is an action degree. I have learned new things and developed new skills, and have come know more about myself. My only regret is that I did not do this earlier in my life as my life would have been a lot easier. But then if God is the one who is the plan maker of each of our lives then the way things came to be is the way things would be.

So I am just grateful that I did get that opportunity to research and discover so many things. I should not have any regret because life is a growing and learning experience that comes at different phases in life. So I guess this is the time that I was supposed to learn all of this new knowledge that God has allowed me to. And once again I must say that I'm grateful that God has allowed me to get to this point in my life. I am thankful to be able to have received this higher education and I am grateful for all of the wonderful experiences it has given me. I knew all along that going to seminary would definitely enhance me and make me more knowledgeable and confident and help me to feel better and more confident about myself.

Seminary taught me and that I am someone and I should be proud of what I have accomplished through the grace of God, which is the part I will never forget because through it all God has been the guiding force of everything that has occurred in my life.

As I type this paper, I think of my mother and how she would have been so proud of me because I am so proud of me; and not the kind of proud that the Bible says that we should not be, but the kind of proud that allowed me to see all of the people that helped me along the way to be all that I could be. It took a long time but I am no longer insecure and I am truly grateful for all that God has done for me and I will be forever grateful and His humble servant for as long as God allows me to live.

I am going to continue to help people just like people have helped me to find the total me. I want to be a part of helping others to do the same as I have done if this is what they want to do. I always knew that there were those who don't want to put the work in, but one of the most important things that I have learned is that they must want to put in the work to come to this point. It is not easy but it is doable with God who supplies all my needs and is with me all of the time. I know that no one can change what I have come to know about God.

This not something my mother taught me, but what I have learned about God for myself. Not only have I seen this for myself, but I have seen what God has done for my children and for my sister which is what made me answer the call into the ministry many years ago. I am faithful to my call from God because I know without a shadow of a doubt that God is responsible for everything positive that has happened in my life. He is responsible for all of the situations that helped to make me a better person and this is why I would like to help others become better people as well.

I believe in the wake of all that is currently going on in the city that more people should make an attempt to help others because if we think of helping others the world could be a better place. This is why the children I teach are wearing uniforms with ties: to

let them know that we want a better life for them. This is also why I am teaching the Bible to the children: so they can have a real chance at life in spite of all of the disregard there is for certain cultures. When a child came to me and said that someone was making fun of him, I went to 1 Corinthians 13 to teach the children about love and show them how they should be acting if they really had love for each other. I told them if they really loved each other they would not call each other names. I even asked them if they ever gave anything away and if they did was it because they really cared about the person they were giving their things to. I explained that if they just gave their things away because they did not fit them anymore, or just to give things away they were really not giving their things away because they cared about people.

I also explained to them that if they really cared about people—which is a form of love—they would not call each other names and make people feel bad about themselves. I explained that when they make people feel bad, it must be because they really don't love themselves. I think this is what we need to teach children so they will begin to understand what caring and what love really is. I think when we teach children these things when they are young they will remember these things they are being taught and this will help the children to be better people when they grow up.

I believe if we all begin to teach children how to love one another this world will be a better place. And there would not be so much killing going on by the police who are supposed to protect us and take care of our children. I think that when the church goes back to teaching about love and stops thinking so much about money the world will be a better place. This is why I am now working so hard at teaching the children about love



and about God so the children can see that there is a better way of living and a better way of thinking.

This is what the church and parents should be teaching their children. I believe if we all focus on treating each other right this world could be a better place. I believe parents should really pay close attention and not spoil their boys when they are small so they might have a chance at life when they grow up. The reason I am saying this is because a lot of little boys are so spoiled that it makes it very hard to teach them. They lack training because their moms just baby them all of the time. I believe mothers of sons should really work hard at training their little boys while they are young so they can have a chance at life and not be killed at an early age. I say this because I too have a son and my husband taught me not to baby him but to raise and correct him and this really helped us to have a nice responsible son.

This is what I am attempting to do at the Children's Program especially where I see that there is a need. I teach and I talk and we have group sessions with the children's peers and that really helps some of the children. We attempt to make it really clear to the children how they should act in class and in school. We also let the children teach each other because we have learned that peer teaching really works.

We are really doing a work to make sure that we make a difference in the lives of the children we have in our program and we let the children know right from wrong. We do not spoil the children because we know that is not going to help them in the long run. We love the children that are left in our care. We discern what is needed in each child and work to help the child fix it. We always inform the child's parent regarding what was said to the child and how we attempted to handle a situation.

We do more than piecemeal ministry at the Children's Program; we minister to the whole child. The whole staff works together for the good of the child and we really get to know the child and what the child is like and we work to correct what needs to be corrected. We teach from the Bible to make our point in showing the child why they should not do something. We always explain why something is not right or why the child should not have done what they did. We always praise the children when they do something that is good and give a good answer about something. We know if we put a lot into teaching the whole child that we might help save the children's lives when they become adults. We are truly attempting to save a life now by planting a seed that we know is going to take root and make a difference in that child's life.

My goal as the founder and director of the Children's Program is to be a part of changing what is currently going on in many of the communities. I believe if we really focus our attention on helping to make a difference in the lives of our children that things will turn around. There would no longer be so many killings because we would be helping to show the children how to behave in the right manner in order to keep them safe and out of harm's way.

I believe we all have to become more global in our teaching of love and of proper behavior while the children are young, so they will remember what they have been taught. Many families are broken and they do not have parenting training. Because of this some children are not getting what they need to be lacking many skills. We work hard with the children because they need outside help. Some of the parents don't realize that they are leading their children to destruction by not training them. So this is why our

focus at the program is ministering to the whole child and the whole staff on a daily basis, reminding and pointing out things that are not done in the correct way.

We are all works in progress and we are always trying to make ourselves better in some way. At staff meetings we discuss how this child behaves or how we should proceed with that child, making sure that everyone understands what is going on with each particular child. In this way, we are all on-board in knowing how to handle a particular child and we all know how we are going to proceed with that child. Whenever anything occurs with a particular child, we make sure to inform the parent so the parent will know how we handle a situation or what occurred with the child. In many cases the child's teacher also informs us of the behavior of a child, so we can better understand the child's behavior. This is why I like the term "all hands on deck," because all the hands in a child's life must working together for the good of the child.

We have one child whose mother is so out of control that we cannot work with her, so we work with the father and the grandparents. Because of the mother's behavior we can see why the child who is a lovable child is so aggressive with the other children. We say what needs to be said to the bullying parent, but we interact more fully with the father and grandparents of behalf of them and their child. The mother's behavior does not affect the way the child is treated in the program because we all love and care for the child and understands the situation. Both the mother and child know that the child is very special to me.

Because I cook for the program, I know how this child eats so I know how much food to serve, and the child likes that. Because I know that that child likes to pray I always ask the child to say the grace. The child used to be concerned about how the

mother's attitude might affect the way I feel, but has come to learn that my feelings are not affected by the way the mother acts.

I make sure to serve food that the children like to eat because I don't know what really happens to the children at home. Because they get picked up at 6 p.m., at least we know that they will have one meal, and always give seconds to kids that ask. This is what I believe that Jesus meant when he said "feed my sheep" (John 21:17). I believe feeding the sheep is ministering to the whole person and that is what we do at the Children's Program and what we do so lovingly that the children never want to leave the program.

We are constantly telling the children to put back on their shoes in case there is an emergency and we need to get out of the building in a hurry. I believe the children take off their shoes because they feel at home and this is exactly how we want them to feel. We know the children look forward to coming to the program, especially on Fridays because they do not have to do any homework. Friday is strictly to have fun and enjoy themselves after a long hard week of work because most of our children attend Success Academies and they get a lot of homework. The parents pay us to make sure that the children's homework is done correctly, so they will only have to check their children's homework when they get home.

We love the children and prepare every day to make sure that the children have a great day and enjoy themselves at the program and have fun at the end of their long school day from 7:30 to 4:30. We are glad to be able to assist and provide children an extended day to enjoy and we are equally happy that because of the service we provide parents can go to their place of work knowing that their children are receiving the best of care. Parents do not have to prepare their children with a meal if they do not chose to

because their children attend Children's Program that was designed to meet the needs of parents and their children completely. So at the end of parent's long working day the parents can just go home and rest if they choose.

This program was designed to bridge the gap between the church and the community; to give children a place where they can be safe; learn about God; meet new friends; and become a part of a community of believers. We hope that each one of the children and staff members that have attended or have been involved in the program might have a better life because of their experience at the Mount Zion Year-Round Children's Program.

## CHAPTER 6 CASE STUDIES

### **Insiders and Outsiders**

Having the Children's Program has also changed the way insiders interact with outsiders. Insiders from the church have even gone as far as to give children various nicknames. There is one little boy in the program named Kenneth who helps to make our program a multi-cultural program because he is Indian. Insiders have given Kenneth a new name because all he likes to eat is chicken nuggets. So whenever trustees from the church see him they call him chicken nuggets and Kenneth just falls out laughing. As I think of this little boy I think of his favorite line when he is playing connect four: "what you gonna' do, where you gonna' go." He makes us laugh all of the time; what a change the Children's Program has brought to the church.

The insiders have also given a nickname to a little girl that attends the Children's Program. Her name is Naomi but one of the trustees, who also cleans the church, has us all calling Naomi 'Omi' and when we call her this she laughs because she feels special. I think it is special when you're liked and so many of those people have given you a nickname.

## **Case Study Amber**

Amber is a young lady that came to the program through parents that worked in an alternative school. When Amber started working at the program she was still in High School. Amber recently became an unwed mother, and during her pregnancy she never missed a day of work. With her part-time salary she helped the young man that fathered her baby while he was in jail for something he did before Amber met Him. Amber visited this young man the entire time he was away and worked all the while up to a week before she was expected to deliver her baby.

Things were hard for her and she would break down in tears, but Amber never stopped working or supporting this young man while he was away. At the time Amber was only 19 years old. This young man is only 22 years old. Amber is now 20 years old, and I am pleased to say that she has already returned to work and is getting ready to return to school next month. The young man whom Amber helped was blessed by God to get into some kind of training program with UPS and is hoping to be bought on as a full-time employee. Amber's baby is not even two months old and Amber is back at work escorting children. I am really cheering for Amber and really hoping that she will continue her education and maybe think about becoming a teacher once she finishes her education.

Amber is also a member of my site team who was considered an outsider and has helped to change things around the church as well. Amber is a young adult who has now worked at the church for 2 years. She is very funny and very direct. Amber laughs a lot and is always saying funny things to members of the church and to the children in the program. The children and their parents really love Amber as well as many of the trustees of the church.

As a young adult Amber brought a lot of love to the program even though she herself needed some guidance as far as her education was concerned. Amber was a very angry young lady when she came to the program from alterative school. Amber says her mother had her going to a counselor when she first arrived at the Children's Program because she had anger management needs. She was angry because she did not know that her mom gave her to her father's mother to raise, in order to get herself together and find a place for her and Amber to stay. Amber's anger came because her mom had another baby while Amber was living with her grandmother and Amber did not understand why her sister was able to stay with her mom but not her.

Since she has come to work at the church in the Children's Program she no longer needs counseling and is no longer angry with her mom. In fact she and her mom have become very close to each other. Amber likes to attribute her success with her mom to working with the children in the Children's Program. Amber says she has learned a great deal about loving and releasing anger and placing her anger into something positive like working with children.

I'm pleased to say that in the two years Amber has worked at the program she has graduated from High School and has one class to complete to receive her Associate Degree. I am also pleased to say that Amber has begun her own family and is due to have her own child in two weeks. Amber has been able by the grace of God to work with good health and is waiting to have her baby boy this coming October.

Amber's mom also returned to school, has begun working and is waiting for the arrival of her first grandchild. Friday was Amber's last day and she is now officially



home waiting to bring her little boy into the world. I pray that she has a great delivery and I pray that God continues to bless Amber and her family.

### **Case Study Aneika**

Aneika is another young mother in the program. Aneika is 20 years old, has a 2 year old son and is now 6 months pregnant with her second child. Because she only has a GED she can only be paid a limited salary. She angers me as I'm working with these young people attempting to help them to want more in their lives. But instead they are all having babies, receiving Public Assistance and need to have a little extra money in their pockets to survive. I tried to explain to Aneika today that I texted her to tell her that she did not have to pick up a child from their school today. But instead Aneika did not get the text message.

When she did arrive I said "I texted you to let you know that you did not have to pick up the sisters today did you get my message." Aneika turned around and said so casually, "My phone is cut off." I replied, "You just got paid on Friday how can I get in touch with you?" I explained to her that she that she needed to give me someone's number so I would be able to contact her if there were an emergency. I went on to explain to Aneika that we needed to be able to speak with each other and it was not good to not have any line of communication. She said she understood what I was trying to explain but I don't know if she really understood the full impact of what I was trying to say to her. These young people have enough education to be able to work with the school age children we have in the program, but they don't seem to understand the importance of education and this is so sad.

But I'm going to continue to try and get my point across to these young adults. What I want to get across to them is that having a relationship with God and continuing

their education is very important. This is what I expect to get across to the adults when I minister to them. I wanted ministry and this is exactly what this program is providing for me: the opportunity to lead people to God and to help them help themselves. Hopefully I will be able to get Aneika to understand what I meant before she leaves to have her second child. With two young children she needs to have a phone that will allow her to be able to contact someone in case of an emergency with her children. .

## CHAPTER 7 EVALUATION

During the closing ceremony at our very first summer camp, parents stood and told the audience what a difference the program had made in their lives. Their declarations came as a complete surprise to everyone involved with the Children's Program, as we did not really know how much the program meant to the parents. Some of the parents even cried as they explained how much the Children's Program had helped their children. Parents went on to explain what peace of mind they had because they no longer had to worry about their children while they were at work. This was our first real evidence of how the parents felt about the program.

A student I taught years ago came over to the church to get an application for his mother for his little sister. The brother knew his mother needed someone to care for his sister and he came over to take the application because he knew about the program. His mother said she was so grateful to have the program because she did not know what she was going to do. Because the brother wanted to go to basketball practice, they needed to find someone to pick up his sister after school in order for him to be able to go to practice. He found the program for his mother and his little sister has been in the Children's Program since it started.

My pastor always wanted to get evaluations out to parents, but I don't think she expected to hear what she heard about the Children's Program and its effectiveness. I

don't believe my pastor was expecting to hear parents say the things they said about the program. I knew parents liked the program but never in my wildest imagination would I have thought the program meant as much as it did to the families we serve. This is what I wanted but this is not what I expected to hear because people are always so critical. But this is exactly what I wanted the program to mean to parents and their children.

The reason I say this is because my pastor and I are very different and I say exactly what I need to say to people. I am no-nonsense in my approach with people. I say what needs to be said—never in a bad way—but I say what should be said. My pastor on the other hand wants to be liked to such a point that she does not address things. She will never take my side in anything that happens. This used to bother me, but now I recognize that she is the pastor and the church is her charge, so whatever she does is ok with me.

I was very happy to hear the parent's report of what they thought of the program and its effectiveness, and also what the parents thought of me as the program director. Evaluations forms were also given out to be filled in but there was not enough blank space on the forms. The evaluation forms were handed out along with an envelope for donations for the program. (My pastor is known for always looking for a donation of some sort.) The parents even spoke of the workers and how pleased they were with the workers that care for their children. The program actually received great evaluations and this is exactly what we wanted to hear so we would know how the program was really doing and what the community really felt about the program and the work we were doing for the community.

We also see how well the program is doing by the number of children we have in the program. This is really a good way to see how we are doing and currently we are at

our capacity of 30 children. Children come and children go but thank God we are maintaining our capacity. We also have the schools referring children from their school to our after-school program. Most of the schools keep an after-school program listing and we are on most of the lists that the schools give out to their parents. This is another good evaluation of how well the after-school program is doing because most of the schools in our area refer children to our program.

The Children's Program is well-known in the community. Referrals come from agencies that deal with parents who are in shelters, as well as many referrals from other organizations in the community. Another way to evaluate the program is when parents who have already have a child enrolled in the program say they can't wait for their younger child to become of age to start the Children's Program. This is further proof that we are doing a good job at the program. We have not received any complaints because we are always looking to improve the Children's Program by any means necessary.

We are really thanking God at this time because things for the program are going well—we have an open reenrollment as one child leaves another child takes their place and I thank God for this. We take nothing for granted as we clearly understand that all of what is happening is by the Grace of God. We now have employees that are good workers, who don't mind putting in a good day's work and we are so grateful of this.

The after-school seems to be maintaining its funds and this is also another good way of gauging how things are going. Most of the parents in the program are current in their accounts and are not behind in their payments. So things are going well for the Children's Program at this current time and again I must thank God because I know that this all has to do with the Grace of God and His Mercy.

I also believe that, in part, our evaluation is based on the desire of the church to be of service to our community. I believe that the church on the whole is doing well in this area. Mount Zion A. M. E. Church is really serving our neighboring community at this point and I am very pleased with my pastor who is really going beyond the doors of the church in her attempts to be of service to the neighboring community. I saw this during the time of the gas explosion in the community. After the explosion neighbors needed a place to gather and meet. Each week the pastor would stay late at the church so these community members could have their community meetings at the church. There they met with lawyers and other community members who were helping them to put in claims for what they lost during the explosion.

Another thing I have noticed about the pastor is how she comes out of her office and makes attempts to really get to know the parents who have their children in the program. Although I am the founder of the Children's Program it is a good thing that the two of us work with each other because it takes a community of people working together to make changes and it also allows the two of us to run the church together for the good of the entire church. I am a firm believer that success of a ministry is greater when all parties are able to use their individual gifts and talents in a church then the church will be successful at ministry. I believe this because I know that God has given each person a gift or gifts to be used for the good of the entire church body. I also believe that if we all work together in the church to make the church successful the church will be successful at serving the community inside and outside.

I was also very surprised to hear my pastor preach about the injustice that occurred with Eric Gardner. I was thinking to myself that the church has really been very

quiet on this issue and I had not heard anything from the church at all. To my surprise I was walking by the pastor and I heard her ask someone what was the name of the man that was killed on Staten Island. I said Eric Gardner and I also told her that they were going to have a march on Washington; and she in return she said and that she would let me make the announcement.

I was totally surprised when my pastor connected what had happen with Eric Gardner with a scripture and began to preach about the injustice that was occurring in our country. Having my pastor preach about the injustice in the country has allowed me to see my pastor in a different light. In fact, the way that she is now beginning to conduct her ministry is really allowing me to see a change in her that is a good change; and for me this is an evaluation for Mount Zion A. M. E. Church on the whole.

There is definitely change taking place at Mount Zion A. M. E. Church. I became a member of the National Action Network headed by Reverend Al Sharpton; I went down with buses for the Justice for All March in Washington D.C.; I also went to the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Lincoln Memorial speech. I took photographs of both marches that I will place on the bulletin board to let our members know that we are a global church involved and concerned with what is going on in our country

I personally believe that if the church is not following the ministry of Jesus then the church is not conducting true ministry. The reason I give this critique of the church in general is because all of the churches are being too quiet on this issue of injustice. I would like to hear the Catholic Cardinal who has a lot to say about various issues but is so very quiet at this present time. This is not a position I think that church should take. I think the church should have something to say about injustice of any kind and I am so

pleased that the country and people of every culture and color should lend their support regarding injustice. I believe Mount Zion A. M. E. Church is headed in the right direction with their ministry because they are following the ministry of Jesus who came to show humankind what true ministry is all about. I say that any church that is quiet at this point in time is a church that is not following the lead of Jesus.

It is almost like the church is afraid to address issues and this is so unlike Jesus. I would say on the whole the church does not get a good evaluation. The church appears to be afraid to address issues and I believe this is one of the reason people are not really attending church like they used to because people cannot see what the church is doing for them. The church appears to only be concerned about raising monies to keep the individual church going but they do not care about the people. I believe the leaders of these churches should remember that people come in every color and God is the creator of humankind. If we say we stand for God then we must remember that Jesus had unconditional love for all of humankind.

At this point I would have to give Mount Zion A. M. E. (as opposed to the Church in general) an A rating on their evaluation because they are definitely serving the community. I would have to evaluate its pastor the Reverend Jo-An L. with an A rating for the effort and concern she is now showing for the neighboring community that surrounds her church; and how informed she is regarding what is currently going in in the country that she is speaking out about to her church congregation. That concern has taken a larger form as the A. M. E. Church has become as a supporter of the National Action Network which indicates that the Reverend at Mount Zion and the A. M. E. as a whole are taking a greater interest about what happens in our city and over the country.



On the bus to a march supported by the National Action Network March on Washington, I sat next to a white female doctor. It was not the color of her skin that bought her to want to march at the rally in Washington, but the cause. This doctor's name was Bernice B. Bernhard and she was the kindest woman. She was taking the trip to Washington against her family's wishes because she had just finished having surgery for breast cancer and had to have someone push her around in a wheel chair.

We talked about her practice as a psychologist. She told how years ago she had participated in the march with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and she had to be a part of this march to Washington because she believed everyone should be involved in this walk for injustice. I was really impressed with this woman who would come to march even though she had to be pushed in a wheelchair to be there. She was with a black women friend of hers that she said she asked to come along with her for two reasons: one was to be involved in the march and the other was to bring gifts for this woman's granddaughter.

I want everyone to know that there are good people out in the field from various cultures who want the same things that people of color want and that is to have justice for all people. This woman really impressed me because she was not thinking about herself; she was thinking about others and still wanted to go down in history as a trailblazer working for the cause. I am so glad that I got the opportunity to meet Bernice B. Bernhard. She reminds me of Walter Rauschenbusch, the white minister whose ministry was in the field attempting to make a difference just like Jesus did out in the fields helping people who had no means of helping themselves who needed assistance.

On the bus, Bernice told me that when she was working on her doctoral degree and she had called all of her friends to inform them that she would not be able to see

them until she finished working on her degree. She gave me her telephone number so the two of us can get together with our husbands, so I now have a new friend. Another very nice young man in his forties shared with us that the injustice that had been done to him while he was at the Board of Education made him want to be a part of the march. His name is Carl, and he reminded me of my son as all the young men marching with us could have been anyone of our sons.

While I was on the march to Washington and listened to people speak I was able to realize that healing had really taken place in me. I thanked God for allowing me to see that I was no longer hurting from an experience I had many years ago while working at Consolidated Edison Company. While I listened to people talking I heard the deep anger that was within them. This helped me to understand that I was really attending the March because I have a son and I could relate to why I needed to march for the cause of injustice. And it was not because I had deep rooted anger or because I was prejudiced. I was truly attending the March because this could have been my son.

I also am grateful that God allowed me to be able to represent Mount Zion A.M.E. Church at the March on Washington because it made my church a part of the global work that the church needed to be involved in. This is why we are Marching on Washington and this is why the church and as many people that can should be Marching on Washington to make a change in law happen that will change the way things are still be done.

This is why I am walking and marching and I am grateful to understand the real reason that people were needed to march. This is the growth I have received while working on this project and it is the growth of understanding that a minister needs to be

involved with issues of our country and know what is going on outside of the church that affects what is going on inside of the church. Awareness of what is going on outside of the church will make the minister a more effective minister or pastor. When a pastor or minister is knowledgeable about issues that occur in the country he or she can educate the congregation. An educated congregation is an informed congregation that can make a difference in the lives of those in their neighboring community.

When this happens the local churches can begin to work in the vineyards and begin to make a difference in the lives of those who live in the communities that are looking for change and need help with employment, housing, and health care. These are the issues that are facing people who live in the communities of these local churches. Many of our churches and ministers need to be educated in the social gospel so they can realize what the issues that are facing the people today.

In order to be a part of what is needed today churches need to conduct a congregation study so they will first get a better understanding why the pews are empty. People are too busy trying to keep their heads above water and do not see where the church is really helping them. I think the churches really need to re-evaluate themselves so they can begin to do what the church used to do, which is to teach and help people to be able to help themselves. The only way the church is going to be able to do this is by understanding the issues people are facing today and to begin to help educate people in how to help themselves.

I love the Lord that has shown me who I am and has given me purpose in life. Until I found God there was no life for me. I did not know who I was or what I was able to do in life. God is responsible for all that I am and all that I will ever be in life. I

honestly believe if it was not for God I would not have had children because I prayed to God for my children. I also prayed to God to show me why I was born and to show me what skill and talents I had because before I met God I did not know the purpose of my life. But now that I have known God, He has blessed and has taken complete care of me. God has done some things for me in my life that would be unbelievable to some.

It is because of the things God has done that I totally believe and surrender my life to God. I am a witness to the fact that what God says that He will do He can and will do. This is why I can honestly say that everything that has occurred in my life and some things that I have not shared have been done by God. This is why I have completely surrendered my life to God and whatever God wants me to do, I will do.

I actually know if it were not for the Grace and Mercy of God I would not be who I am now. Nor would I have accomplished what I have accomplished at this point. I am grateful that God has given me the opportunity to grow into many different areas such as becoming a founder of a Children's Program. I am also excited to have been given the chance to work as an administrator and supervisor, gaining the experience of supervising a staff of six, with a degree that has been in my possession for some time. This is definitely an opportunity from God because I was unable to get a position where I could work with this particular degree. But instead God has allowed me to develop a business that has given me experience in areas where I had never worked before.

These are the things I'm able to see through my spiritual eye that God has done for me, actually helping me in areas in which I have no experience. There are two additional blessings that God has bestowed upon me. I have learned to put God first in everything that involves my life. Once I allowed God to come into my life so many

things have changed in my life and my life is so much better than it ever was before.

Developing this Children's Program has given me so many experiences in so many different needed areas of my life. Working at the Children's Program has really given me needed experience and a great deal more patience dealing with various people I come into contact with.

I have really developed the interpersonal skills which I have gained while interacting with parents with many different personalities. It has become easier and many of my relationships with parents are quite pleasant. Interacting with parents at the Children's Program has helped me to develop the ability to stay calm while interacting with parents and collecting fees. I must say I really believe that I have gotten better in many areas because of all of the people I come into contact with during the operation of the Children's Program. This is such a wonderful experience to work with children and parents in a school-like atmosphere in a position that validates a degree that I received years ago and never was given the opportunity to make use of.

I would never have realized this if the Spirit of the living God did not bring this understanding to me. This is why I say God is an amazing God; and He is responsible for all that I have done and all that I am. I do realize that I sound like a complete fool or like someone living in a fantasy but everything that I have shared with you really happened this way; and this is why I can say that I now understand what it means when people say God has a purpose for your life.

I say this because I understand that God did and does have a purpose for my life. The things that are being revealed to me by God that transpire in my life may make me seem foolish to someone who does not have a spiritual eye. But I know that those who

can see through their spiritual eye understand exactly what I am testifying to: what He is doing in my life as I evaluate myself during this process, being a witness to all that is transpired in my life before the demonstration proposal project, and now as I evaluate myself through this process.

The Spirit of God is revealing things to me so I might bear witness to all God has allowed during this process. I believe that God is preparing me for my release so that I might be able to seize the opportunity when it presents itself. Temporary certification of my degree would have expired without the required experience in the area that I hold the Advance Degree. God directed me to have the degree updated to a permanent certification based on other requirements I held that made it possible for me to make the switch. I didn't even realize what God was doing back then but I realize what God has done now.

I didn't know anything about the process but a young lady that was working at the Board of Education just took care of me back then and just took care of changing what needed to be done. I now know that it was God that was taking care of everything I needed to have done and God was putting everything in place. I know that God was preparing me for what His plans were for my life. I understand it all now and I thank God for what he has done.

God is allowing me to see that the things that I wanted to do but was not ready to do at the time, happened because I needed to do what He wanted me to do for Him. I also understand that because I was obedient even when I was not allowed to do the things that I wanted to do with my life. But I still kept the faith and did what God wanted me to do for Him first. God was also preparing me for things that I wanted for my life. It almost

seems like it was a test to see if I would do what God wanted me to do for Him even though nothing that I wanted to do was made possible.

But after I passed my test God is now showing me that He was preparing me all the while to be able to also do the things I wanted to do with my life. The Spirit of God has opened my eyes and has allowed me to see that all of the things I wanted to do in my life I have done, but not in the place I wanted to do it in. Instead I have worked in the house of God as an assistant principal of a school. But God has allowed me to do much more than that He allowed me to be a founder of what has the possibility of becoming a school.

This is just what I've been thinking about with the permission of my pastor because the church is her charge not my charge; and I always want to stay in the lane she has allowed me to work. But I do know that I am a visionary and God is allowing me to come up with some great ideas of how we can expand the Children's Program into a school. Because we have the available space in the top of the church, it makes a lot of sense to use what we already have in place that is working for us. I say this because I now am an experienced administrator that can take my new-found experience to the next level of inquiry. After my graduation I will have the needed credentials to head the next level of planned operation. I do believe the pastor and the official board would be open to review a proposal for an extended project to expand what is already in place.

I believe this is what my pastor is already thinking because she gave me a performance review. She said she was giving me the review because has not given me one since 2012. But this made me wonder why she would be giving me a performance review at this time, when I have resolved to work as the cook and not look for anything at

this current time. She has always in the past said that a director does what they have to do for the good of the program.

But I on the other hand I don't worry about what I am going to get because I have come to realize that God is blessing me with much more than money can buy and God is supplying all of my needs. But I do think that the real reason behind the review is to get ideas of what I am thinking as a next step in my career because I am getting ready to graduate this coming summer.

My pastor seems to be treating me a little different from the way she treated me in the past. I really need to see what plans God has for me at this particular point in my life because I am certain that God has another plan for me. I am waiting to see what lies ahead for me because now that I am nearing my release there seems to be a part of me that asks what I am doing here at the church. I know, however, that I am going to be given an opportunity to return to the Board of Education because the class action suit I am part of, most recently heard the last test was biased and all teachers can be re-instated with seniority back into their old schools.

So this is a possible choice I will have for the New Year that I would have to pray to God for directions. I have also planned that Amber who will be graduating with her associate degree after completing two classes that she needs to finish would take over my position. If this is what God has planned for me I don't think that I am going to fill out the review because I am not sure if I am ready to reveal any other plans for the church until God tells me which way I should go in my planning. I would first need to hear from God so I can get a better understanding of what plans God has for me.



I must ask God what plans He has for me because God's plans must always come first. Yes, I am grateful that all of these wonderful blessings are coming my way but I still need to hear from God on these things because I can do nothing without the guidance from the Spirit of God. I truly need to hear from God on all matters in my life because God has been so good to me and to my family and I am grateful for all that God has done for me. It is just like the song that says if I had ten thousand tongues I could not stop praising God enough because He is so worthy to receive all of the Praise and all of the honor for the great things He has done in my life and in so many others' lives. This is my evaluation that tells the story of where God has brought me from and tell of the triumph I have had in my life all because of the love God has for me and His mercy endures forever.

## CHAPTER 8

### MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES

Attending New York Theological Seminary has really helped me to develop as a professional individual who has the confidence of knowing that I have been completely trained to be a skilled leader of the church. I have always heard that going to seminary would give me the necessary training that I needed to be a professional leader. The training that I received at New York Theological Seminary can be used in any field of professional business.

This was the first time I understood that seminary teaches more than the Bible. New York Theological Seminary helps pastors and ministers to increase their professional skills. It is because of the training I received at New York Theological Seminary that my Ministerial Competencies have greatly improved.

New York Theological Seminary has helped me to develop and become better at is the skill of counseling. I have gained much more patience in general with how I communicate with others, which is especially important in dealing with parents. During a recent conversation with one of the parents I was attempting to explain that teachers do not pressure a child who is giving an answer to whatever the teacher has been teaching. Suddenly, the parent went into a rage. I simply let her finish what she was saying and very calmly gave my side of the conversation. At the end of the conversation I definitely

knew I had been told off by the parent regarding some work of her daughter had been placed on the bulletin board by one of the workers.

The parent was very displeased with her child's work. While I was sitting in the back I noticed the child working very hard at making corrections on the assignment her mother had her re-doing. I asked the child if she wanted me to check her work and she said yes. The child's work was very good and when her mother came in I told her that her daughter's work only had a few corrections. The child's mother literally went totally off on me. In front of the entire staff, I quietly listened to everything she had to say. I let her say what she needed to say and that was the end of the conversation.

After I went home and went over everything the parent had said to me I realized that she had really told me off. I was wondering if she just wanted to tell me off for some reason. I decided that I was going to re-address our conversation the next day. As soon as she came to the program the next day I told her that I had been thinking about what had occurred the previous day. She did not give me a chance to say anything. She began by saying she was very sorry for the way she behaved and thought she owed me an apology because she was very tired and really wanted to say she was definitely out of order and really hoped I would accept her apology.

Having this parent greet me at the door telling me that she was so sorry about the way she spoke to me the day before and she wanted to apologize for the manner in which she spoke to me really helped me to understand how much I have grown and developed. Rather than immediately responding, I thought about the manner in which she had spoken to me and was going to re-address it very calmly because I realized that she was very upset about something; but I did not know that she was upset because she thought I was

addressing her parenting skills. I was merely explaining to her how well her daughter had written her project on Jesus and explaining what little errors her daughter had on the index card she wrote her paragraph on. I was also explaining to the parent that her daughter had done a very good job on the work she had written.

I really did not understand why this parent was so upset. However, this parent went on to say that she and her daughter knew so much more about God and that she did not understand why her daughter had not written all that she knew about God in her first writing. I told the parent that she was pushing her daughter in the way my son's teacher wanted me to push my son when he was younger. I didn't and he came out just fine. He is dean of students at Roads Charter High School. I also explained to the parents that most teachers would let the child work at their pace and that teachers even let students use inventive spelling to spell words because this allows the teacher to see if the child understands the phonetic sounds that will eventually help the child to know exactly how to spell a particular word.

The daughter was very shy and the mother was trying to get her to speak up and out. I believe that because her mother is so intimidating the daughter does not speak up and appears to be so shy and does not speak up. I never saw this side of the mother before. Seeing this side of the mother allowed me to understand why her child is so timid. The mother's behavior is abusive and this seems to be why the little girl does not speak up. The child is a beautiful child but a little awkward in her behavior and now I understand why. Because the mother liked to talk to me about God and other things, it allowed me to see that the mother has other issues going on that we need to address at

another time. But for now I thank God for revealing what He allowed me to see in order give me a better understanding of why the little girl is the way she is.

This also helps me to understand why the pastor has changed the name of the program to include Family and Children's Services when the church incorporated the Children's Program. I was quite surprised but pleased that I was able to develop a program that the church and pastor loved so much that they speedily had the program incorporated. Thank God for the great things He has done because this is what I wanted—to be able to create something for the church that would help the church in so many ways. I am very proud of my skills and my site team. It is because of the skills I have that I have another church in New Rochelle is waiting for me to create a Children's Program for their church as well. I will be beginning this project as soon as I graduate. I told the pastor of Bethel Word of Life that I would sit down with him after graduation.

I have also decided that starting programs for churches will be the business I will go into after graduation because this is where my heart and skills are. This is also a good business that will help church with their finances and also help to bring new families into the church because this is exactly what we have seen happen at Mount Zion A. M. E. Church after the start of their Children's Program. This therefore, shows us that having a Children's Program in the midst of the church will help the church in many ways by keeping young people in the church because most of the churches are facing the same aging problem because most of their members are older. If more churches include a secular Children's Program in their church they would attract younger parents into their church and this would help to keep the church alive because the program will become the second venue that brings people into the church.

Until the church figures out the need of the people in their neighboring community the church will remain empty and dying. I believe that if the church is not willing to go out of its doors to get the people, then it needs to create something to get the people of their communities to come into them. If the church does not create a service that will help their particular neighboring community, the church will remain in a declining state. It is the church's responsibility to figure out what is needed in its neighboring community and supply that need.

I will present videos and photos from my iPad and iPhone 6 as demonstration of what the children in the Children's Program could bring to their church. I will also be able to show how young adults who work the Children's Program will eventually want to join their church. I will be able to show a potential new client how having a Children's Program in their church will also bring in young adult workers that will be able to escort children from their schools to the church. Because of the Children's Program, they will now have adults as well as school-age children in their church. One service being offered to the neighboring community will bring three different needed age groups into the church.

This is why it is necessary to keep the church alive in more ways than one because having technology in the church helps to keep up with technology. I will be able to show the different activities the children become involved in simply because the children are allowed to produce their own experiences. Having an iPad and iPhone 6 and a hi-tech new camera that sends photos directly to other phones will really impress new clients. It will give an indication of what will occur at their church as a result of having a Children's Program in their midst. The new clients will be able to view the children

creating dances and teaching each other new moves. They will also see the different types of games that the children become involved in, such as *American Idol*, where some children become judges while others display their dancing or singing skills. The children have engaged in play that is productive and displays a high level of “multiple intelligence,” because children are allowed to create their own experience. Children have done peer teaching in every area of their play and have in a sense become choreographers.

The children have also begun teaching the word of God to their peers during their Wednesday Bible study. The children brought their own Bibles from home so they could read to the other children in the Children’s Program and teach a Bible study lesson, which I recorded as a video.

I also recorded the young adult staff workers taking over and teaching a biblical message to the children, either because they wanted to teach the children or simply because I had to answer the telephone. The young adult staff just continues to teach the children where I left off. All of the young adult staff can and have been worship leaders at some point and have the skills to take over in the event that I cannot be present to begin the worship service or Bible study. All of the young adult staff can also give a word about God if the reverend is not present.

Each and every day children at the Children’s Program argue over who is going to pray and bless the food before they eat and after they complete their homework. There are always so many hands up to pray that we just let all of the children pray. If no child wishes to pray, we select one that never volunteers because we want all of the children to know how to pray. We also want all of the children to be able to explain what we

discussed the week before. Each week before we discuss a lesson, we always go over what we taught the week before.

Teaching the children about the Bible has become very important to me. Based on all that is happening in the world today, I really want to be a part of the community that teach the children about God so that I will know that the seed has been planted and will begin to grow at some point in the child's life. I want the children to be given a chance to know God for themselves which is why I always tell the children that God loves them and He will hear them when they speak to Him. I tell the children this because I want them to know that there is a higher power that will help them whenever they want Him. I know that the children are listening because they always want to pray. And when I am in the back room I can hear them talking to each other saying, "No, you have to pray before you eat." I can always hear the children correcting each other on their behavior when they are not doing something they should be doing. Children will even come over to me and ask if they can pray.

The children never give us a hard time when it comes to studying the word of God. They always want to study and they always want to read the word of God. I know this to be true because more and more children are bringing in their Bibles on Wednesday. Parents really like the fact that we are teaching their children the Word of God. In fact a lot of parents have reported that their children come home and tell them what they have studied on Wednesdays. I was overjoyed when one the children's grandmothers came over to me and said she felt moved to make a donation to the church. I just looked at her and smiled because she had told me that she was not working and yet she still wanted to make a donation to the church. On the following Sunday while I was



sitting in the church the pastor made an announcement saying that one of the parents of one of the children from the ministry that Reverend Johnson heads contributed a donation to the church for \$500.

I was completely surprised and pleased at the time same to have a parent of the children make a contribution to the church. This really pleased me because it shows that parents like the service they are receiving from the church, and the fact that this woman attended the church several times shows she also liked the church because of the program. Thus is a great evaluation for the Children's Program because people don't make donations to something they don't like. Having a parent donate \$500 speaks for itself and is a great evaluation for the program and the work that is being done in the Children's Program.

Another parent whose child comes to the Children's Program during the summer and during the Christmas break and any other time school is not in session called to ask if I knew of a babysitter that could take care of her younger son. Being unable to find a baby sitter for her, I told the parent that I would watch the child myself, and if the child was too young for the Children's Program, I would ask my daughter who is off from work for the holiday if she would keep an eye on the child. This is what I think working with the neighboring community should involve and that is to be there when families are having a problem we in the community should be able to help parents out in their time of need.

This is what I believe churches are in the community for and that is to help their neighbors when they can. This is how I believe the church will grow because people in the community will see that the church is really there for them. I believe this is the kind

of ministry that He had when He walked the earth. Jesus met people where they were and He helped them right on the spot. He did not just give them the word He helped them first, then He gave them a word. My thought is that if the church would continue to follow what Jesus did when He walked this earth then the church would grow just as it did when Jesus walked this earth. The reason that the church is dying is because the church of today is not following the blueprints Jesus left for the church to follow; the church is currently doing their own thing and their own thing is not working. This is why there is so much trouble in the world today and this is because the plans Jesus left for us are not being followed.

I am still working hard at the Children's Program with a hard-working wonderful staff of five employees who all really want and appreciate their jobs and the work they are doing with the children. I appreciate and thank God that I finally have a staff that completely wants to work that is always on time and does not complain. This is the very first time that I am able to say that all of the people that are currently working at the Children's Program want their jobs. It truly makes a difference when you are working with people that want their job. It is a totally different environment when working with people that respect the work they are doing. There is no complaining, there are no attitudes; every staff member is there because they want to earn money and are willing to do whatever they need to do to keep the program running smoothly. It is a pleasure to work at the Children's Program with a staff like the one we now have working.

This staff understands that I'm a female on the front lines, working and going to school to be the best I can be and to obtain the necessary credentials. Having skills and

credentials are necessary to be taken seriously in any field and it is especially so in the church.

I deliberately remained working in the church so I could really learn programs on the computer. I have learned how to use the Excel program that can be used for billing and maintaining various types of accounts. I am familiar with cutting and pasting when preparing various documents that might need to be changed and not typed over. I was struggling with knowing how to make two sided copies on the Xerox machine. I can now make two sided copies successfully. I have also learned how to use various new technological devices as enhancements to the Gospel.

My focus on outreach ministry began with the need to communicate the Children's Program to the community. In order to do this I needed to make up fliers for the after school program so I could distribute them to the neighboring community and schools within the church's area. My first batch of 700 fliers went out to P.S. 57, where I had formerly taught. It was very easy to distribute fliers at the school because they were more than glad to help get started in the new Children's Program. The next school I went to was P.S. 83 and all of the elementary schools in the area of the Mount Zion A. M. E. Church. After this we placed fliers in all of the grocery stores in the area of the church including taping fliers on poles in the community. We also placed fliers in most of the buildings in the neighboring community of Mount Zion A. M. E. Church. Distributing fliers all over the community helped us to spread the word about the new Children's Program that was coming to the community by passing out new brochures for the newly incorporated family and Children's Program that explained what the Children's Program had to offer.

We wanted the program to be a multi-cultural program that would have multi-cultural children and staff. We now have Hispanic, Muslim, and children with an Indian background. We wanted children from every background so we would have a well-balanced program with both children and staff from various cultural groups. Having a multi-cultural Children's Program with a multi-cultural staff represents the neighboring community of Mount Zion A. M. E. Church and the schools in the churches region.

We began to receive calls from parents of children who were attending the neighboring community schools. Our program's multi-cultural, multi-intelligence method has created an environment that the children really enjoy and never want to leave. A lot of the children even hid from their parents when their parents came to pick them up because they love the style of program we run.

Because the program is a multiple intelligence program many materials are placed out in various centers for the children to be able to create their own experience which is what multiple intelligences is all about—creating your own experience which enhances the person's multiple intelligence. The experience changes what was formerly stored in the brain and allows it to store the new information in the brain through a process called brain plasticity which is the focus of my demonstration project.

## CHAPTER 9

### HOW I HAVE GROWN

Going for my doctoral degree is something I believe that God wanted for me. I believe this because God has provided the means to be able to attend seminary. I believe it was necessary for me to get into seminary to get the training I need to move to the next level of ministry, and in order to allow others to see how serious I am about ministry. I'm not sure that going to the next level in ministry will even make a difference to others but it will make a difference to me and God. This is going to allow me to advance myself in many areas both inside and outside of the church; and because of this I have worked hard at learning a variety of new technologies.

One competency that I did not expect to develop was my computer skills. In the process of producing this project, I have learned everything from how to cut and paste, to how to produce a PDF document, and use it as an email attachment. These basic skills should be known by every pastor or minister because being able to use a computer is a necessity.

Every computer skill I have developed will help in conducting ministry at Mount Zion A. M. E. Church and the Year-Round Children's Program which is constantly in need of outreach materials, and the Children's Program is in need of continual outreach. This is why it is important that I know how to produce fliers that can be distributed by hand. Creating and handing out fliers and creating T-shirts have definitely helped the

Children's Program outreach process in contacting a large audience of people that has helped us to become a multi-cultural Children's Program.

The new skills I have acquired such as learning how to use an iPad and iPhone 6 have really helped me because I have now learned how to make videos and send pictures. I have also learned how to use Excel on the computer which is how I keep account records for our clients whose children are in the Mount Zion A. M. E. Children's Program. Since attending seminary I have become skilled in making fliers that can be given out to inform people of current events taking place church and in the Children's Program year around. Handing out fliers by hand is an easy and effective way to communicate because the fliers do all of the talking. During the summer months our most effective outreach has been distributing t-shirts. Always being able to communicate by some means is very important for the growth of the Children's Program. Conducting some form of continuous outreach is always necessary if the Children's Program is to continue to maintain itself.

The next important ministerial competence is being able to have a diverse working staff which includes having older and younger employees as well as having a multi-cultural staff and a multi-cultural climate.

I now understand why it is necessary to know how to use new technological equipment. There are different events and all sorts of programs going on at the church and the Children's Program that makes it necessary for everyone involved to know how to use new technology and bring this technology into the church. Bringing technology to the children will encourage the younger generation to return to the church.

The main church needs to upgrade its technology so the church of today can be seen as catching up with the future. I hope that the Children's Program will be able to donate a security camera to the church. The camera would help the secretary and those on the lower level of the church see who is knocking at the door when they are sitting in the main office of the church. I would also like to see a monitor in the main sanctuary that lets people know what scripture we are studying. These technologies would also show people that we are trying to upgrade the church.

Just as I am attempting to update myself I think it is time for the church to update itself so it is will be able to attract people. Just as Jesus conducted His ministry differently from those of His time, the church of today must upgrade itself and not just sit in the same state that the church was in many years ago. This is a different time and age and the church needs to develop various ministries that will assist the people in their communities. This is a new day and the church must be able to do something for the people who live in their neighboring communities. There are so many services that the church can look into providing to the neighboring community instead of just sitting and waiting for the few members they have to give money for support.

I pay very close attention to many of the parents who come into the Children's Program and I see that they all have needs. It makes these parents feel like they belong when they come into the Children's Program after a long day at work or wherever they are coming from and there is extra food left over and we offer the parents something to eat. I like it when they say in return what did we have today and I especially like it when they go into the kitchen and accept the meal from whoever is in the kitchen. This always

makes me feel really good because I feel as if the parents feel at home and that they belong to the church.

This is what churches should feel like when you walk into them from the outside. It should feel like you belong to the church and the church should embrace people the same way when they come to the church. I know that we must always remember to keep ourselves safe. But I think the people in the church should change their behavior and make every attempt to make people who come into the church feel welcome.

An upgraded church is an informed church. It says that the people in this church care about themselves and their neighboring community. It also shows how educated and informed the leadership of the church is. As I begin to close this chapter of ministerial competencies Titus 2:1-14 where the author spoke of Doing Good for the Sake of the Gospel which is exactly what I am doing.

You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine.  
Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled,  
and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted too much wine, but to teach what is good.  
Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children,  
to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled.  
In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness  
and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. They should encourage young men to be self-controlled. In everything set an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing had to say about us...



For the grace of God have appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

As I close with this final chapter I would like to close with the book of Titus because I have identified myself as one of those Elders that want to do good even when I don’t want to do good. I find that the good in me will always do what is right in the sight of God regardless what has been done to me. I am thankful to have found the book of Titus that explains exactly why I always seem to do well. I now know that it is because I belong to God and I am saved. Titus 3 says an Elder and others are saved in order to do good. This explains a lot for me because I have recently gotten to the point where I began to realize that the things people do that are ungodly, simply show me where I am with God. Now I realize after reading Titus 3 that the real reason for my actions is because I was born again to do good for the sake of the Gospel and I belong to God. This explains to me why I always end up doing the right things regardless of what someone does to me.

I understand it all now and this is the reason that I just can’t think about myself first but I always think of others. I even wondered why I always want to treat others just as I treat myself and this is scriptural. If there is someone that has less than me, I am always going to look out for the other person. To look at me you would never think that I am a minister of the Gospel because I like fashion and I like to look nice. What is most important to me is that I love the Lord with all my heart and all my soul and all my mind; and I love my neighbor as I love myself; and I would do anything for my true neighbor. But I have grown in the Spirit and I am able to know the difference between those that are false prophets and real prophets.

The Holy Spirit has made me keen in the Spirit as stated in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16, when scripture talks about God's wisdom revealed by the Spirit. We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

However, as it is written:  
What no eye has seen,  
what no ear has heard,  
and what no human mind has conceived"—  
the things God has prepared for those who love him  
these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.  
The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God  
For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them?  
In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

I know I might sound strange but this is what I am attempting to say that is beginning to happen to me that I am beginning to understand things a little. Then the scripture goes on to say

What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.  
The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.  
The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for,  
"Who has known the mind of the Lord  
so as to instruct him?"  
But we have the mind of Christ.

The instructions to the Elder are very clear in saying that appropriate and sound doctrine should be taught at all times. This is why I have tried to become an expert in using computers and much of the new technology. I want to be current in using various

types of computer and communications equipment so I can do well for the sake of the Gospel. This is what makes it all worth study to show myself approved.

## CHAPTER 10 WHAT'S NEXT?

At this point and time in my life I am currently working at the Children's Program at Mount Zion A. M. E. Church, worshiping at Greater Bethel A. M. E. Church, and holding on to an application booklet waiting for the pastor to say I can start a Children's Program at her church. All I have to do is think of a way to get her to say yes to the idea of having a Children's Program in her church and be able to let her see that it would help her financially and bring people into the church.

So my current mission is to think of ways to create a Children's Program in the new church Greater Bethel that I have been loaned out to while working the Children's Program in Mount Zion A. M. E. Church. I have already obtained an application to begin the process of starting the second Children's Program in the new church. I thank God for He has already given me a new name for this program which is my childhood church that I only recalled while working on this project. However, I've only been at this new sister church for one month and I am already experiencing resistance from the new church members who are territorial and not accepting of new members entering their church which is why some of the universal church churches are dying.

I am going to offer the new pastor what I believe she will not be able to say no to and that is if she would let me rent space in the church so I can start the Children's Program there at no cost to her and her church. I will pay her rent to house the Children's

Program in the church and I will get insurance for the program and it will not cost her one cent. This way she will not have to worry about an additional cost to her church because they have so many bills at the time and this is why she has not agreed to have a Children's Program in the church. The reason that I sent away for a new application is because I spoke with a school that can use another Children's Program in the area and this new church is in the area of that school.

So I therefore can see that God has already given me my next assignment and vision of what he has for me to do and I am ready, willing and able to get started. I have begun working on my next assignment mentally and have only to begin the process of starting the second Children's Program before the application that I am currently holding expires and I have to send away for another application. The difference in this program will be that I will be incorporated and use my incorporated name for the Children's Program and I will pay the insurance for the program. This will be the choice that I will be able to give people who would like to have a Children's Program in their church but can't afford the expense.

This is the next step that God has placed in my heart to do for church so they will be able to survive financially and bring people into their churches. I currently have a pastor who wants me to start a Children's Program in his church. I told him that I would get back to him and let him know when I can start the process. He told me that he has his own people that will operate his Children's Program once the program has started. So all I have to do is have the time to begin this new endeavor God has placed in my heart, which is to start a business of creating Children's Programs to help pastors with low membership increase their membership and add to their churches' finances.

It is amazing how God can show one what their God-given purpose for life is. It's so amazing because once you have found what your purpose is for life it gives you energy and a purpose to continue to do what has been placed on your heart. It gives you joy, unspeakable joy that the world didn't give and the world can't take away.

It's amazing to finally realize that God's purpose for my life would include a church I walked by for many years never giving a thought that I would one day create a business for the community and church that will forever be a part of my life's legacy and the history of Mount Zion A. M. E. Church History.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROPOSAL



MOUNT ZION AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH YEAR-ROUND CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

By

ALFREDA GRIFFIN-JOHNSON

DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROPOSAL

February 1, 2014

Challenge Statement

I am an Itinerant Elder serving as an Associate Minister at Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church located in Manhattan, New York. Children ages 5 thru 11 are not currently being integrated into the life of our church. This demonstration project will create a model for a children outreach Ministry of Educational and Spiritual support.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING**

I am honored and pleased to begin with information I received during an interview with Reverend Lillian Webb. Reverend Webb is a 90 year old Associate Itinerant Minister at Mount Zion A.M.E. Church and is the first woman to be ordained in the New York Annual Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Reverend Webb is also the daughter of the late Rev. Richard Frier—founder of Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church. Reverend Webb is continuing to carry the torch passed on too her by her father. In fact, Reverend Webb's daughter Reverend Jo-An L. Owings is now Pastor of the church her grandfather started.

As the story is told by Reverend Webb, her father Richard Frier migrated from Charleston, South Carolina to New York City in 1920 with a few family members and started a storefront church. By 1921 Pastor Richard Frier and his storefront members saved up enough money to purchase a bank and turned it in to what is now known as Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church which stands on the corner of 116<sup>th</sup> Street and Madison Avenue in Manhattan, New York. Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church is on the border line between East Harlem and Central Harlem in Manhattan Community District 11. This district is a low and moderate income district that is made up of first and second generation Puerto Ricans, African-Americans and a growing population of Mexicans, West Indians, Dominicans, Asians, Salvadorans and other Central American Immigrants. This District has one of the highest concentrations of

Puerto Ricans at 52.1% of the population, 35.7% as non-Hispanic black, 7.3% as non-Hispanic White, 2.7% Asian and Pacific Islander. By New York City averages, youth makes up a larger than normal percentage of the East Harlem population with 40.6% of the residents 18 or younger. The average income is \$21,000 in this community.<sup>1</sup>

Mount Zion is surrounded by lots of passing cars and people passing by on foot. There are stores, high-rise buildings, public housing, schools and not many playgrounds. There are major streets to cross at every corner surrounding the church and bus stops on each side of the church. Because of the church's location the church has great potential to attract people passing by if the church had more outreach programs to offer the community. During the week Mount Zion conducts a soup kitchen on Wednesday and a Food Pantry on Friday. During these two days Mount Zion members come into contact with over 250 people a week—250 people that are being fed food but no one is attempting to give these people Spiritual food. All of these people are potential members if they are ministered to during their visit to the church.

This shows that although Mount Zion is a church that studies the word of God this church needs to focus more on serving their neighboring community. The increase in studying is a good change because this gives their members more options. There is now a noon day Bible study and a bible study at 6p.m. for working people. Adding an additional study group has really helped as it allows those who won't come out at night to come out in the day. Additional classes have been added on the third Sunday after morning worship service for those who were not able to attend any of the other classes. In addition to these

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/lucds/mn11profile.pdf> (accessed December 15, 2013).

additional classes that were added I have begun a Wednesday worship services for Mount Zion Year-Round Children's Program.

The worship is conducted on days the children are dismissed early from school. Having a Wednesday worship service allows my young adult staff to participate in the worship service, which to my surprise, they enjoy. None of the young adult staff attend church and what is so great about conducting this worship service is that the staff and children all get to participate. The children conduct peer teaching and my young adult staff brings the word of God. The children are so excited to participate in the worship service. They are not afraid to stand up and say what they want to say to their peers. My young adult staff have grown so much that they all participated in a major church event—an introduction of a methodology called brain plasticity was found during the research for this project. I thank God for leading me to begin the Wednesday worship service. I was so surprised when one of the children's parents stopped by to pick up her child stayed for the worship service and said she really enjoyed the worship service. She prayed at the altar with the staff and children.

During our Wednesday afternoon worship service we had a site visit with my school partner Pastor Dave Watson. Pastor Dave, as we all call him, said what he observed was actually three churches in the church building. He said the children and staff seem to look at me as their pastor. He also said he felt I had the heart of a shepherd. He felt that I was doing a good job because I was bringing the word to the children and staff at a level they could understand. Pastor Dave said the food pantry was untapped and was a church in its self that needed to be ministered too because those untapped folks are actually downstairs while Wednesday worship is going on upstairs. However, I don't

think it would be so easy to invite the folks downstairs to Wednesday worship service because there is a different group of people downstairs conducting the food program. I would most definitely have to speak with the pastor to get permission first and the pastor would have to speak with the group downstairs who conduct the food program. A systematic change would have to be put in to place in order for the food service areas could be approached.

My staff has begun using the brain plasticity theory as a model in promoting change at Mount Zion African Methodist Church. It is a theory which recognizes varying brain functions and their changes over time—"a term that refers to the brain's ability to change and adapt as a result of experience."<sup>2</sup> I believe God is directing my site team who are also my staff in the children's program, on how to bring awareness and to institute change—together in love so we can become one body in Christ.

I plan to show it is time for Mount Zion African Methodist Church to become really involved in the social gospel and take to the street where our community members are in need; for the church to follow the lead of Jesus Christ's ministry. If the church truly looks at what Jesus did throughout his ministry then the church would be attending to the social gospel. The social gospel involves being concerned with our neighbors' concerns. I believe this is what loving our neighbors as we love ourselves really means. I believe the church should become more involved in helping humankind; not just by going to church on Sundays and to Bible study, while not doing anything to really help others outside of the church walls. This is what Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church is designed to do. And this is why I thank God for being so patient with me and placing me

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<sup>2</sup> Kendra Cherry, "What Is Brain Plasticity?" <http://psychology.about.com/od/biopsychology/f/brain-plasticity.htm>, accessed January 4, 2014.

in my rightful place to see the social gospel of Jesus Christ be a part of the ministry at Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS**

I am an Itinerant Elder serving as an Associate Minister at Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church located in Manhattan, New York. Children ages 5 thru 11 are not currently being integrated into the life of our church. This demonstration project will create a model for a children outreach Ministry of Educational and Spiritual support.

Church and the neighboring community revealed an ambiguous challenge that I believe is a blessing for the ministry of Mount Zion African Methodist Church. Mount Zion is an aging and dying church congregation with a few children and young adults. There is no vision for the future other than the pastor's vision of turning the upstairs part of the church in to a health station for senior citizens. It seems that this vision for the church is currently stalled because of economic hardship facing the country at the present moment. There appears to be no attempt to understand why the health facility that was down the block on the same side of the street closed nor does it appear that any understanding has been given too what the real needs of the neighboring community are. The primary focus of the church seems to revolve specifically on the members within the church and raising monies to keep the church afloat which is understandable. However, I believe this project started at just the right time under the divine intervention of God. So, Mount Zion would have a team that could focus on the neighboring community where the church has stood for 90 years; and to examine the community to get a better understanding of the needs of the people in the church's neighborhood. The preliminary analysis revealed a need for a visionary who has insight into what would bring a renewed energy to the insiders in the church; an insight that would allow insiders to observe the



needs of outsiders in their neighboring community; and that would help to keep the church alive. A unique charter school system—that church insiders were not aware of—recently opened in the neighborhood. This new charter school has an usual dismissal time. The neighboring community children’s programs were unable to accommodate the needs of the families either attending, or wishing to attend the charter. A unique Child Care Service was needed that did not exist in the community was needed for those wanting to take advantage of this new school opportunity. Fortunately, this project was begun at just the right time for the church to take advantage of this major opportunity to accommodate the neighboring community.

Developing such a program would bring the church community into contact with many children and their families and all of these families are potential members for the church. The church members also needed to become more child-friendly to embrace the potential of these children and their families coming into the church. Mount Zion A.M.E. Church started with family members and still today has many members that are related to each other in some way. The current church members need to become friendlier and less insular—welcoming outsiders coming into their church community. This is necessary because Mount Zion A.M.E. Church has lost new members due to the unfriendly reception by the congregants. Creating a children’s year-round program would attract both children and their parents because parents are going to support their children in whatever way makes their children happy. My site team and I along with the pastor have begun selecting parents for a program advisory committee. The advisory committee will help come with ideas to advance the children’s program and hopefully grow an interest in visiting Mount Zion A.M.E. Church.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION**

##### **Goals and strategies**

**Goal 1-**Develop a flexible transitional After School Program for Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church that will offer a unique Child Care Service to the neighboring community that will provide educational support and safe place for children.

- **Strategy 1:** Employees will work split shifts in order to meet the pickup needs of each family.
- **Strategy 2:** To be deliberate offering services that neighboring programs do not offer.
- **Strategy 3:** To create an environment supplied with materials that stimulate children's creative abilities so the child will create their own activities and productions.

**Evaluation for Goal 1** Current parents referring other parents for Child Care Service.

**Goal 2:** To build relationships with individuals, communities and organizations to bring about social changes.

- **Strategy 1:** To allow program participants to use facility space for their children's events when needed.
- **Strategy 2:** To focus on training such as brain plasticity to bring forth systematic changes based on new experiences.
- **Strategy 3:** To strive to show how to build solidarity with the "least" of those around us.

**Evaluation 2:** Our expected outcome is for insiders to change how they interact and view outsiders in the community as they learn more about demonstrating the gospel of Jesus in their everyday life.

**Goal 3:** To have Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church incorporate the Mount Zion Year-Round Children's Program ("Another Choice").

- **Strategy 1:** To have children from the program invite their parents and family members to see the children perform in church events.
- **Strategy 2:** To allow the church membership to see how having the children's Program helps the church spiritually and financially and gain new members.

**Evaluation 3:** Observing how many families joined the church whose children attend the program.

## CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### **Biblical Question**

What are the essential Biblical stories children need to be introduced to the Bible?

After reading theories of stages of development<sup>3</sup> the information suggests from my interpretation that any story in the Biblical Text would be a good starting place. Freud's development theories suggest that children between the ages 5 thru 11 are in a zone stage called Latency. Erickson calls this same stage Industry vs. Inferiority. Both theorists suggest that children in this stage are not dealing with any sexual or aggressive drives which produces crises for the child in many areas but during this stage is temporarily dormant and there is no libidinal zone at this stage to cause any body conflict and because of this the Latency is a period of calm and stability. This does not mean that child's life will be conflict-free. This is a stage of ego growing and master cognitive and social skills development occurs at this time. Erickson calls this stage industry versus inferiority. He says in this stage children forget their past and hopes which had a great deal to do with their family and children at this stage are ready to begin learning useful skills from the wider culture. It is because of these finding that I would begin to teach the Creation Story to the children just like a genre the children are used to hearing during their story time. The reason I would begin with the Creation Story to let the children

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<sup>3</sup> "Freud and Erikson Compared, Comparing Theories of Development,"  
<http://psychology.about.com/library/bl/bl-freud-erikson-compared.htm>, accessed January 4, 2014.

know how the earth began. This would begin the process of going through the biblical text.

### **Theological Question**

How can we translate the word of God so children can understand it? We have looked at various theories of development and styles of teaching methods to find out what method produces the highest retention rate in children. Our research shows the highest retention rate is that of the hands-on methods. I would say we should think of fun when we think of how to relate the word of God to children. We should also think age appropriate such as the Jewish Children's museum in Brooklyn New York. At this museum all of the Bible stories are taught to the children by using amazing methods. There are hands on Arts and Craft project with a guide that directs the children while the children are actually making Bible artifacts of the Bible. To teach the children terms and information regarding their culture there is a symbol games set up like just like the wheel of fortune game. Children have to select numbers from a mounted game board to make a match of an artifact from the Bible regarding their culture. Teaching the Biblical text in this manner makes the children really want to learn. The Jewish Children's Museum is a great model of how children learn which is while having fun and gaining new experiences.

My Site Team and I agree with the Constructivist Theory which is experience; also called *Brain Plasticity* it is one of the best ways for children to learn. Children always remember fun activities and whatever they have constructed themselves. This is why translating the word of God with the children creating and producing plays and games; having hands on activities such as coloring and writing; and reading stories with

pictures are all great ideas of how the word of God can be translated so children of all ages can understand the word of God.

### **Educational Theory Question**

What are the learning theories of how children learn? There are several learning theories concerning how children learn while they are developing through stages of development. The constructivist learning theory suggests that children learn in various ways and this correlates with multiple intelligence theory. Let's take a look at what the constructivist theory suggest. This theory states that learning is an active process of creating meaning from different experiences. The belief is that experience is best because students /children will learn by trying to make sense of some things on their own with a teacher as a guide to help them. The reason for this is that sensory input is organized by the person receiving the stimuli and this cannot always be directly transferred from the teacher/instructor to the student or child.<sup>4</sup>

The constructivist learning theory has included several methods of learning retention levels as evidence to show what methods of teaching delivers the most results.

Methods of Teaching and Retention results are as follows:

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| • <b>Lecture</b>                                | <b>5%</b>               |
| • <b>Reading</b>                                | <b>10%</b>              |
| • <b>Audio Visual</b>                           | <b>20%</b>              |
| • <b>Demonstration</b>                          | <b>30%</b>              |
| • <b>Discussion Group</b>                       | <b>50%</b>              |
| • <b>Practice by doing</b>                      | <b>75%</b>              |
| • <b>Teach others/immediate use of learning</b> | <b>90%</b> <sup>5</sup> |

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<sup>4</sup> "Teaching with the Constructivist Learning Theory," [http://www.ndt-ed.org/TeachingResources/ClassroomTips/Constructivist%20\\_Learning.htm](http://www.ndt-ed.org/TeachingResources/ClassroomTips/Constructivist%20_Learning.htm), accessed January 4, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

The constructivist theory discusses exactly what my Site Team and I have discovered during our research. The name for this type of learning as we have discovered during our research is called neuroplasticity. Brain plasticity is the way of learning from one's own experiences. This type of learning simply comes from introducing people to experiences which will simply change how a person thinks and acts because of new experiences. People will begin to learn that things are not the way they thought. The brain removes what was stored in the brain and changes what was stored with new information gained from new experiences. This will definitely change how the person acted before because the prior knowledge that was not good has now been replaced with positive knowledge. This is one of the major theories of learning discovered since 1970 because before then it was thought that the brain could not change. But, since 1970 it has been discovered in cases of people who were injured, a part of their physical therapy now includes learning new techniques that bring physical changes in their brain that can even cause people to learn how to walk again. There are even camps where people go just for new experiences that will change how people use to think.

## **CHAPTER 5 EVALUATION PROCESS**

### **Method of Evaluation 1**

This by June (Goal 3 was accomplished Mount Zion Year-Round Children's Program was officially incorporated under the name of Mount Zion A.M.E. Church Another Choice Youth and Family Services Inc., a copy of the new incorporation data will be sent as an attachment along with this project.

### **Method of Evaluation 2**

A Program evaluation was distributed this August 16, 2013 at the closing Summer Camp Ceremony there was a total of 17 question asked for parents to assess the Children's Year-Round Program. The evaluation included space for writing additional comments. During the closing ceremony parents got up and gave verbal assessment of the program and care their children received from both sessions of the Year-Round Child Program.

During the course of my Evaluation Process there was one theologian who stuck out in my mind. His name is Walter Rauschenbusch who was a Christian theologian and a Baptist Minister. He was gifted and called by God to have a focus in the social gospel movement. Walter Rauschenbusch's eleven-year ministry focused on those who live in various tenement areas of New York City—such as the neighboring community that surrounds Mount Zion A.M.E. Church.



Walter was as a pastor working with people who had no means of employment, lived in poor housing, who had no health care, and whose children received inadequate education. He traveled about speaking about the need for the Christians to transform not only their individual lives but the lives of society. Walter Rauschenbusch's concept of the Kingdom of God as the kingdom of justice and peace which humanity must constantly work at was the center of his theology.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES**

#### **The Process**

It was decided at the Site Team Meeting that each member of the Site Team should be responsible for a particular section of the project. During each Site Team meeting assignments are distributed that need to be updated.

#### **Theologian**

Candidate has a strong focus on outreach ministry and community involvement. She embraces street ministry giving out flyers and brochures that she specifically designed for the children's program outreach Ministry which she is clearly a call from God.

#### **Change agent**

Candidate always attempts to involve others in change which she says change should always involve multi-culture involvement.

#### **Counselor**

Candidate is approachable and skilled and has the ability to aid in spiritual healing.

#### **Competencies Chosen For Development**

##### **Outreach**

Candidate will be more deliberate in handing out newly created program brochures for the now newly incorporated family & children's program.

### **Evaluation**

The children's program has been fully embraced and accepted by Mount Zion A.M.E. Church and has been incorporated into a children and family corporation. Outreach has been successful because of the Social Gospel focus placed on the needs of people in the neighboring community.

### **Strategies**

- A) Re-training the mind by using the process of Brain Plasticity which is the process of changing unhealthy prior knowledge and presenting opportunity for new and different experiences which would change what was stored in their brain with new knowledge gained from new experiences.

### **Technology**

Candidate has intentionally placed a deliberate focus on learning how to operate and use more technical devices to become more involved with technology.

### **Evaluation**

- A) Watching children displaying different behavior based on their new way of thinking because of introducing children to new experiences. Taking lots of photo on her new IPOD, sending pictures to children and others by e-mail. Candidate has upgraded her phone to an I-phone 4.

**Strategies:**

- A) Be systematic in preparing school age children to peer teach the gospel of Jesus. Taking videos of the children's performances with her new I-Pad.
- B) . Allowing school age Elementary students to prepare their own message of Jesus to present to their peers.

**Evaluation:**

- A) Presenting videos of school age Elementary school children presenting their message of the word of God in their own words to their peers.

**Worship Leader:**

Training staff member from the children's program to become Worship Leader during children's weekly worship service.

**Strategies:**

- A) To prepare each staff member before they actually participate as worship leader during an actual event which each staff has done in a major event.
- B) Instruct and prepare staff to begin the weekly worship service in the event I do not arrive on time.

**Evaluation:**

All of the Year-round children staff can and have participated as a speaker of worship Leader in major production.

**Spiritual leader:**

To continue to seek God and ask him to continue to lead and direct my path.

**Strategies:**

- A) Continuously teach the staff and children at the Year-Round Children's Program how to worship and Praise God each and every day.
- B) Each day selecting a different child that raises their hands to pray each and every day during after school program meals and worship.

**Evaluation:**

Distributing evaluation sheet with only boxes to check with very little space available and see how parents looked for every avail space they could find on the sheet to write evaluation and how pleased and blessed they are to have their children in a program such as Mount Zion Year-Round Children's Program of which I am the founder and director. Praises God from whom all blessing flow.

## APPENDIX A TIMELINE

<b>Date</b>	<b>Task/Activity</b>	<b>Tools/Necessary to complete Task</b>	<b>Person Responsibility</b>
	Meet with Community Fire Dept. to meet their required	Notification signs, specific garbage cans	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Create Employment Applications	Xerox Paper	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Create Program Applications	Xerox Paper	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Create various school notification forms	Xerox Paper	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Create fliers Announcing New Child Care Service in the Community	Xerox Paper	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Recruit New Employees and conduct initial interview	Xerox applicants credentials	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Hire New staff of 4 employees	Make copies of employee information	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Prepare for employees on-site training	Hand out job Descriptions and duties	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Send employees for finger print	Handout necessary paperwork	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Send employees for SCR background check	Make copies of necessary paper work	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Take new employees to learn school route	Give employee transportation pass	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Fashion Show	Fashion show participants	Donna Taneesha
	Woman's Day Platforms Worship Service	7 speakers, 1 person for prayer I scripture children to praise dance	Rev. Johnson
	Children Step dance Welcome	Uniform unfits with cheer leader arm bands	Rev. Johnson & Program Staff
	Wednesday Children's Worship Service	Various speakers which include peer teaching	Rev. Johnson & staff

	Tour of Brooklyn Bridge	Print permission slips for children from parents	Rev. Johnson & staff
	Safety Training Bike Riding for children	Print permission slips for children from parents	Rev. Johnson staff and Zoe Bike Organization
	Horseback Riding Academy	Print permission slips for children	Rev. Johnson & staff & Zoe Bike Organization
	FAO Schwartz Toys Store	Printed Permission Slips	Rev. Johnson & Staff
	Miniature Golf Randall's Island Children Sports Camp Activities	Print permission slips and pickup school lunch	Rev. Johnson staff Randall's Island Staff
	Children's Creative Writing Project	loose leaf paper, pencils, pen	Rev. Johnson & Staff
	Children Making Pizza	Purchase aprons, Ingredients to add to pizza	Rev. Johnson
	Chucky Cheese Games Room	Monies for children who did not have money for activities	Rev. Johnson & Staff
	Jewish Heritage Museum	Print permission slips, and carry lunch	Rev. Johnson & Staff
	Brooklyn Jewish Children's Museum	Print permission slips, carry lunch	Rev. Johnson & Staff
	Children's Graduation	Purchase Graduation party items	Rev. Johnson & Staff
	Children's Program Tea Party	Purchase Items needed for Children's Tea Party	Rev. Johnson & Staff

## APPENDIX B BUDGET

<b>Date</b>	<b>Task/Activity</b>	<b>Tools/Necessary to complete task</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
	Meet with Community Fire Dept. to meet their required	Notification signs, specific garbage cans	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Go to Brooklyn for CPR & First Aide Training  Get a complete 1 physical	\$150 for CPR and First Aide Training and Car for travel	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Create Employment Applications	Xerox Paper	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Create Program Applications	Xerox Paper	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Create various school notification forms	Xerox Paper	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Create fliers Announcing New Child Care Service in the Community	Xerox Paper	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Recruit New Employees and conduct initial interview	Xerox applicants credentials	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Hire New staff of 4 employees	Make copies of employee information	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Prepare for employees on site training	Hand out job Descriptions and duties	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Send employees for finger print	Handout necessary paperwork	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Send employees for SCR background check	Make copies of necessary paper work	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Send employees to Brooklyn for CPR & First Aide Training	Pay \$150 Fee for Training	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Send Employees for first 15 hour Child Care training	Pay \$250 Fee for training Purchase money order	Rev. Griffin-Johnson



	Take new employees to learn school route	Give employee transportation pass	Rev. Griffin-Johnson
	Create new program t-shirts	Create a design of what t-shirt should look like and purchase for \$500	Rev. Johnson
	Apply for free transportation 156 Williams Street	Go online and fill out free transportation application	Rev. Griffin-Johnson

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